

**LOUDON PARKS AND RECREATION  
FLAG FOOTBALL LEAGUE RULES  
(UPDATED 10/29/24)**

**THE FIELD:**

All games are played on a field 40 yards wide and 80 yards long (Four 20-yard zones). End zones are 10 yards long each.

**UNIFORMS:**

All players on a team are required to wear matching COLORS. No jewelry is allowed.

If the Loudon Parks and Recreation Department (LPRD) deems your clothing inappropriate, you will be asked to change.

All shirts **MUST** be long enough to remain tucked in throughout the down **OR** be short enough so the bottom of the shirt is 2 inches from the top of the flag belt.

Numbers are not required.

**Bottoms:**

The bottom may be either pants or shorts. However, the bottoms **cannot** have belt loops, pockets, or exposed drawstrings. The choice of wearing pants or shorts is up to the individual. Again, the team bottom color does not have to match your team color.

Failure to obey any of the above uniform rules will result in the player being declared ineligible.

**EQUIPMENT:**

All games will be played using a regulation college size ball. All teams are required to supply their own ball. Teams may share a ball during a game.

Kicking tees will be provided for kickoffs at the start of each half.

Flag belts will be provided.

Flag belt must be worn so that player has a flag down each hip and rear.

Shoes must be worn at all times. Shoes with metal cleats are not allowed.

**GAME PLAY:**

**Players:**

Teams may have a maximum of seven (7) players on the field at one time.

**GAME TIME IS FORFIET TIME**

Teams are required to have five (5) players present to start a game. Teams having less than 5 players present at the start of the game will forfeit that game.

All players considered as present for a team at the start of a game must be on the official "Team Roster / Waiver" and must have signed the "Indemnification, Waiver, and Release of Claims". Players must complete this form before the start of the season. All exceptions must be cleared through LPRD.

Teams may be coed – no certain number of males or female players required. New players must appear at LPRD between 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. to be added to the roster. A \$5 player fee must be paid.

**Length of Game:**

Games will be played as two twenty (20) minute halves with a five (5) minute halftime. An overtime period will be played if the two teams are tied at the end of regulation.

The clock will run continuously for the first 18 minutes of each half. Only a timeout can stop the clock.

The clock will stop at the two-minute warning of each half. Inside two minutes, the clock will stop for timeouts, incomplete passes, change of possession, player going out of bounds, touchdowns (will remain stopped until the snap on the change of possession), penalties, and on first downs (clock only stops until markers have been reset).

**THE GAME:**

Games are played between two (2) teams of seven (7) players each with screen blocking.

The designated team manager as listed on the official roster and waiver form will be the only person allowed to confer with the referee or CALL A TIMEOUT.

Teams are entitled to three timeouts per game.

The home team as listed on the league schedule will have choice of possession.

The home team (team A) will receive first option of kicking, receiving, defending a goal, or deferring their decision to the second half. The visiting team (team B) will have second option of kicking, receiving or defending a goal and will have first option at the beginning of the second half unless team A deferred.

**Kickoffs:**

A kickoff will start the beginning of each half only. Kickoffs must be kicked from a tee (no punting or holding the ball on the ground).

Kickoffs will take place at the 20-yard line. Only the kicker may be offside at the time of the kick.

There are no “onsides” kicks. The kickoff must travel at least ten (10) yards and stay in play. If the kick does not travel at least 10 yards or if the kick goes out of bounds, the receiving team will have the option of taking the ball at the 20-yard line, or taking possession at the point the ball traveled out of bounds.

The receiving team may line up in any formation they choose and is not required to have four (4) players within 5 yards of their restraining line (40-yard line). However, the receiving team may not cross their restraining line until the ball is kicked.

The ball is considered live until the player possessing the ball is de-flagged, the ball touches a player then the ground, or rolls out of bounds. The receiving team may advance a rolling ball but must field it cleanly.

A kick traveling through the back of the end zone or downed in the end zone will be considered a touchback and placed on the receiving team’s 20-yard line.

**Momentum Rule:**

Any ball that is caught on a kickoff or interception inside the five (5) yard line and the player’s momentum carries him into the end zone and the ball is downed behind the goal line, the ball is spotted at the point of the catch.

**Offensive Play:**

The offensive team has four (4) downs from where a first down was gained to cross into the next twenty-yard zone or the end zone. Should a penalty move an offensive team back into another zone, that team is still required to cross the initially established first down zone.

Change of possession can only occur on scores, punts, turn over on downs, or interceptions. **There are no fumbles.**

Players may use a two, three, or four-point stance.

Players may not initiate contact with a defender at any time.

**Motion:**

Any player may go in motion, but the motion can not simulate the start of play.

Only one player may be in motion on the snap of the ball as long as the motion is not towards the opponent's goal line.

The player in motion is not considered one of the four players required to be on the line of scrimmage.

**The Snap:**

The center is not required to snap the ball between his legs. However, the ball must be snapped in one continuous motion traveling at least two yards back to any back. Direct snaps are not allowed. The snap may not roll or touch the ground.

**Twenty-Five Second Clock:**

The offense will have twenty-five seconds to snap the ball from the time the ball is declared ready for play.

**Screen Blocking:**

Screen blocking is legally obstructing the opponent without contacting him with any part of the screen blocker's body.

The blocker may not use hands or elbows to gain an advantage. Arms must be held at side or behind back.

The blocker may not initiate contact by jumping in front of a defensive player so closely that the defender has no opportunity to change direction.

**Possessing the Ball:**

An offensive player possessing the ball may not use his hands, arms, or shoulders to prevent a defender from pulling his flag. This includes stiff-arming and ducking your shoulder to shield your hips. Flags must be attached so that one pull will release the flag belt. Tying or twisting the belts together is not allowed.

**Any player caught tampering with his flag belt will be ejected.**

The player with the ball may leave his feet but can not jump or dive into or over a defender.

After a score, the player with the ball must raise his hands so the nearest official can de-flag the scorer.

**Down:**

A player is considered down and play is stopped if a player is de-flagged, goes out of bounds, or his knee, hips, or shoulders touch the ground.

The ball carrier may use his hands or elbows to maintain balance. The ball carrier may also use the ball to maintain balance, or "bearwalk", provided he never loses complete control of the ball.

**Fumbles:**

There are no live fumbles. If a ball is dropped, the ball is dead where it touched the ground.

**Laterals:**

A lateral is only legal if the direction of ball travels sideways or behind the original ball carrier.

If the ball touches the ground on a lateral, the ball is dead where it touched the ground.

A player may not intentionally lateral the ball out of bounds to conserve time.

**Forward Passes:**

A pass is considered forward if the ball travels ahead of the passer, even if the reception is made behind the line of scrimmage. A team may not attempt two forward passes in one play. If a second forward pass is attempted, the penalty will be assessed from where the second pass was thrown. This included “forward laterals”.

Forward passes must be caught with at least one foot coming down in bounds.

**Picks:**

A route is considered an illegal pick if the receiver’s route intentionally travels into the path of the defender without trying to avoid contact.

Downfield picks are allowed provided the person setting the pick is stationary.

**Scoring:**

A touchdown is scored once the ball carriers body breaks the vertical plane of the goal line while in possession of an offensive player.

After the offense scores a touchdown, the offense must attempt a one point or a two-point conversion.

A one point try will be placed at the 10-yard line.

A two point try will be placed at the 15-yard line and the offense will have one down to score.

**Punting:**

The offensive team has the option to punt on fourth down. This must be decided in the huddle and announced. Quick kicks are not allowed. Regular rules regarding the snap will apply.

A timeout is required to change the decision from punting to going for fourth down.

All players must remain stationary until ball is kicked. No rushing is allowed on punts. The defensive team may block the punt if they can do so by jumping vertically without crossing the neutral zone.

All rules regarding receiving kickoffs will also apply to receiving punts.

### **DEFENSIVE PLAY:**

The defensive team may line up in any formation they choose as long as all defenders remain out of the neutral zone.

The defense may HAVE ONLY ONE RUSHER, except on a punt OR INSIDE THE 10-YARD LINE. No rushing is allowed on a punt OR INSIDE THE 10-YARD LINE.

#### **Defensive Checking:**

A defender may not initiate contact with any offensive player at any time. Should an offensive player run into a stationary defensive player, the penalty will result in an offensive penalty.

A defender may not try to strip the ball at any time.

#### **De-flagging an Offensive Player:**

A defensive player may pull on a FLAG ONLY to de-flag an offensive player.

The defender may not grab and hold any part of the offensive player's body or uniform to remove the flag. Should a defender grab an offensive player's uniform without grabbing the flag as well, he must release immediately or the play will result in a live ball defensive holding.

A defender may leave his feet to de-flag an offensive player.

A defensive player may not intentionally de-flag an offensive player without the ball. This includes defenders de-flagging intended receivers while the ball is still in flight.

Should an offensive player's flag fall off without a defender touching it, the play remains live and a one hand touch by a defensive player is required to stop play.

The ball is spotted where the ball carriers' flag is pulled. (i.e. If a flag is pulled behind the first down line, but the ball was stretched across the line at the time, it will not result in a first down.)

#### **Interceptions:**

A pass or lateral that is intercepted by a defensive player may be returned. All rules regarding "Possessing the Ball" now apply to the ball carrier.

A pass or lateral that is intercepted in the end zone may be returned. Once a player leaves the end zone, he cannot go back into the end zone to down the ball for a touchback.

If a pass is intercepted and his momentum carries him into the end zone, the ball can be downed for a touchback. The officials will determine whether the momentum that carried the defender into the end zone could have been stopped before reaching the goal line.

Interceptions that are legally downed in the end zone will be a touchback and brought out to the 20-yard line.

Interceptions that occur on an extra point attempt can be run back for a two-point score.

### **FIGHTING:**

Fighting of any kind will not be tolerated. This includes shoving, wrestling, slapping, or punching. Any player involved in any type of fight will be immediately ejected and suspended for a minimum of 2 years.

Any players leaving the sideline during a fight will be automatically ejected and suspended for the rest of the season.

### **INADVERTENT WHISTLE:**

If a whistle is blown before the play is legally dead, play will stop and the team possessing the ball will have the option of replaying the down or taking the results of the play where the play was blown dead.

If a penalty occurs on a play and is accepted in which an inadvertent whistle was blown, all options are disregarded.

If an inadvertent whistle is blown while the ball is still in flight during a pass or kick, the down will be replayed automatically.

### **OFFICIALS:**

There will be at least one official for all games played.

### **FORFEITS:**

All teams are responsible for knowing their game times and field of play. **Game time is forfeit time.** If a team is not prepared in time or does not have the minimum number of players by this time, the game will be declared a forfeit.

Any team that has been suspended for unsportsmanlike conduct will forfeit that game automatically.

### **ALCOHOL AND ILLEGAL DRUGS:**

Absolutely no alcohol or illegal drugs of any kind are allowed anywhere on the premises of Loudon Parks and Recreation property. Players or spectators bringing alcohol or illegal drugs on the premises will be ejected from the facility and subject to arrest.

Any player suspected of being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs will not be allowed to play and subject to suspension.

### **OVERTIME:**

In the event of a tie game at the end of regulation play, an un-timed overtime period will be played. If the game remains tied after one overtime period, additional periods will be played until the game is decided. Teams are entitled to one time out per overtime period but cannot be saved for the next period.

The overtime will begin with a coin toss. The designated home team will make the call. The winner of the toss will have the option of taking offense, defense, or playing towards a certain goal. The loser of the toss will have the second option. If additional overtime periods are needed, the teams will alternate first option. All overtime periods will be played toward the same goal.

Both teams will have one opportunity on offense. The ball will be placed on the 10-yard line and the offense will have four downs to score unless a turnover occurs or a penalty deems otherwise. All rules regarding "Scoring" will apply.

All rules regarding "Interceptions" will apply except touchbacks will simply result in change of possession. If an interception is not run back for a score, the ball will be placed back on the 10-yard line and the defensive team will now have their offensive opportunity.

All penalties occurring on a turnover will be assessed at the succeeding spot – the 10-yard line.

Play will continue until one team is leading after both teams have an opportunity on offense.

## **REGULATIONS:**

### **Unsportsmanlike Conduct:**

Any activity which involves verbal or physical action will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty. This rule applies to action taken against an official, player, or spectator.

Profanity will not be tolerated and will be considered verbal abuse whether it was directed at an individual or not.

Excessive celebration will not be tolerated and will be considered physical action whether it was directed at an individual or not. This ruling applies to spiking, spinning, or slamming the ball or flag.

Gestures which call attention to oneself will be considered excessive celebration. This includes any type of taunting towards an official, player, or spectator.

Any player receiving two unsportsmanlike penalties in one game will be banned from league play.

The League reserves the right to suspend any player or team for unsportsmanlike conduct. All money will be forfeited.

### **Roughing the Passer:**

Any time the quarterback is hit by a defensive player, it is considered roughing the passer. This includes hitting the quarterback's arm while he is in the throwing motion regardless of whether the ball has been released or not.

Should a defender tip or bat down an attempted pass and make contact with the quarterback afterward, the play is still considered roughing the passer.

### **Defensive Pass Interference:**

A defender may go for any ball in flight provided he does not go through or on top of an offensive player.

Incidental contact may occur and will be up to the discretion of the officials if the contact could have been avoided. All rules regarding "Defensive Checking" still apply.

In order for a pass interference to be called, the ball must travel beyond the offensive line of scrimmage.

Defensive pass interference is a "spot of foul" penalty, and is an automatic first down regardless of where the foul occurred. If the defensive pass interference occurs in the end zone, the ball is placed on the one-yard line and is an automatic first down.

### **Safeties:**

A safety is recorded when an offensive player is de-flagged or fumbles in his own end zone. A safety will also be recorded if the snap travels through the back of the end zone.

Any offensive penalty occurring in their own end zone will result in an automatic safety.

A safety is recorded for the offensive team if a defender intercepts in the field of play and goes back into the end zone and is then downed.

Following a safety, the ball will be placed on the 20-yard line of the team recording the safety and will gain possession.

**Automatic Touchdown:**

An automatic 8-point touchdown will be recorded for the offensive team if an intentional penalty is called on the last defender between the ball carrier and the end zone.

If an intentional defensive pass interference occurs in the end zone the ball will be placed half the distance to the goal line from where the ball was previously snapped and the offense will gain a down.

**MERCY RULE:**

Any game where a team is leading by 17 or more points at or after the two-minute warning of the second half will be stopped at that point.

**OTHER RULES:**

Pass interference will be a spot foul.

Players may not switch teams without a release from current team.

All pass interference penalties will result in the ball being placed at spot of infraction.

All players must be 18 years of age.

Roster limit -15.

**7 Yard Neutral Zone: the set distance of the line of scrimmage between the offense and defense is 7 yards. *If the ball is downed inside the 10- yard line, both teams will line up on the ball.***

**Inside the 10-yard line NO RUSHING, PASS PLAY ONLY, QUARTERBACK CANNOT RUN. The defense may press receivers.**

**Quarterback has 7 seconds to get rid of the ball after the ball is snapped.**

**The quarterback can ONLY Run if RUSHED (once the rusher crosses the line of scrimmage the quarterback may run the ball and the 7 second clock is no longer in effect).**

**Defense may only have one rusher. Once the ball is handed off all players can cross the line of scrimmage.**

**FLAGRANT TACKLING WILL RESULT IN AN AUTOMATIC EJECTION FROM THE LEAGUE.**



# PENALTIES

## i. 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 may not question calls.
5. Games or halves may not 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 complete.
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.
8. Spot fouls in end zone: Defensive (Ball on one-yard line, first down)/Offensive (Safety)

## ii. Defensive spot fouls

|                             |                                   |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Defensive pass interference | Automatic first down              |
| Holding/Illegal Contact     | +5 yards and automatic first down |
| Stripping                   | +5 yards and automatic first down |

## iii. Offensive spot fouls

|   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| Screening or blocking - <b>WITH ARMS EXTENDED</b> | -5 yards and loss of down |
| Charging  | -5 yards and loss of down |
| Flag guarding                                     | -5 yards and loss of down |
| Holding/Illegal Contact                           | -5 yards and loss of down |

## iv. Defensive penalties

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Defensive unnecessary roughness                                       | +10 yards and automatic first down                       |
| Defensive unsportsmanlike conduct                                     | +10 yards and automatic first down                       |
| Offside / illegal substitution  | +5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down |
| Illegal rush <small>(Starting rush from inside 7-yard marker)</small> | +5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down |
| Illegal flag pull <small>(Before the receiver has the ball)</small>   | +5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down |
| Roughing the passer   | +5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down |
| Taunting  | +5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down |

## v. Offensive penalties

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Offensive unnecessary roughness   | -10 yards and loss of down                       |
| Offensive unsportsmanlike conduct   | -10 yards and loss of down                       |
| Offside / false start / illegal substitution  | -5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down |
| Illegal forward pass <small>(Any pass received or lands behind the line of scrimmage or throwing a pass after crossing the line of scrimmage)</small> | -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 <small>(More than one person moving)</small>   | -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 Procedure   | -5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down |
| Taunting  | -5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down |