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***2014 COMPETITIVE LEAGUE RULE BOOK***

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## Rosters

1. Teams rosters must consist of 7-10 players. Play is 5 against 5, boys and girls.
2. Home teams wear dark color jerseys. Visiting teams wear light color jerseys.
3. Teams must start a game with a minimum of five players. In the event of an injury, a team with insufficient substitute players may play with four players on the field, but no fewer than four. If a team is unable to start 5 players or field 4 players at any time in the game, the team will forfeit the game.

## Forfeits

In order to keep games on time, teams arriving more than ten minutes later than their originally scheduled start time will forfeit the game.

## Equipment

Molded and screw-in cleats are permitted. Metal cleats are prohibited.

Players are required to wear protective mouthpieces at all times when on the playing field

Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads, and knee pads. Braces with exposed metals are not allowed without a mouthguard. Players may not play with a cast of any kind.

The belts that hold the flags (not the flags themselves) must be secured to ensure they do not hang down, appearing to be a flag. If the belt is hanging down, flag guarding may be called.

Players must remove all watches, earrings and any other jewelry that the officials deem hazardous.

Players' jerseys must be tucked into the pants if they hang below the belt line. Alternatively, flag belts may be worn outside of the jersey, but jerseys may not hang over the belt. If, in the judgment of an official, a shirt that is out of the pants prevents a defensive player from pulling the flag belt, the ball carrier is down and a flag guarding penalty will be called.

Players must wear the official NFL jersey provided by the league for games. If a player arrives at the game without his/her jersey, he/she may not be permitted to play.

Pants or shorts with belt loops or pockets must be taped. A player's pants or shorts may not be the same color as the flags on the flag belt

These footballs are the mandatory game balls used. No other footballs are permitted for game play.

6U & 8U Division: Wilson NFL Flag Football (Blue) or PEE WEE size football.

10U, 12U, 14U Division: Wilson NFL Flag Football (Brown) or JUNIOR size football.

## Coaches on the Field

Coaches are expected to adhere to PLAYMAKERS FFL Codes of Conduct at all times.

6U- One coach on the field while on offense and defense.

8U- One coach on the field for offense ONLY.

10U- 14U- Coaches cannot be on field during play. Coaches can be on the field during timeouts **ONLY**.

## Sportsmanship

Trash talking of any kind is prohibited. Trash talking is the use of taunting or offensive language against or towards **opposing coaches, players, officials, league personnel or fans**. Officials will give one and only one warning. If trash talking continues, the offender may be ejected from the game.

If any league personnel or official witness any act of unsportsmanlike conduct, including but not limited to, tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, or any other unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and that player may be ejected.

Further disciplinary action may follow including league suspension and expulsion.

After the game, teams are expected to form a line at midfield and congratulate the opposing team regardless the outcome of the game.

## Game Play

1. At the start of each game, coaches and team captains will meet at midfield for a coin toss. The designated AWAY team will call the toss. The winner will choose whether to start on offense or defense and the other team will choose direction.
2. The team on offense takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has three (3) plays to cross midfield (1st down). Once a team crosses midfield, they have three (3) plays to score a touchdown. If the offense fails to reach midfield (first down line) or fails to reach the end zone within three downs, the result is a turnover.
3. Initial possessions at the start of each half and all possessions other than interceptions start on the offense's 5-yard line. All possession changes resulting from interceptions result in possession where the intercepting player is downed. Interceptions may be returned during regular play. Interceptions cannot be return on extra points attempts.
4. Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.

## Terminology

**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.

**Rusher:** the defensive player assigned to rush the quarterback to prevent him/her from passing the ball by pulling his/her flags or by blocking the pass.

**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, forearm, or the chest.

**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 by throwing the ball underhand or pushing it towards a receiver in a shot put type manner past the line of scrimmage.

**Lateral:** a backwards or sideways toss of the ball by the ball carrier. This type of pass is prohibited in PLAYMAKERS FFL.

**Unsportsmanlike Conduct:** A rude, confrontational, or offensive behavior or language.

## Field: Buffer Zone

A 5 yard buffer zone is in place around the perimeter of the playing field during all games. This zone assists in maintaining the safety of players, referees and spectators during game play. Spectators may not stand, sit or set up chairs inside this buffer zone. Only coaches, players, and league personnel are allowed within this zone during the game. Coaches are asked to assist us with the enforcement of this rule.

## Field:



## Substitutions

Player substitutions may only be made during change of possessions. Exceptions are made for injured players.

## Game Timing

1. Games are played on a continuous clock with two 20 minute halves. The PAT is a non-timed play. The clock also stops in the last 2 minutes of the 2nd half on out-of-bounds and incomplete passes and change of possessions.
2. Halftime is 3 minutes long.
3. Each time the ball is spotted, the offense has 30 seconds to snap the ball.
4. Each team has one 30-second time out for each half. Time-outs do not carry over.
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.

## Overtime

If the score is tied at the end of regulation time, overtime will be played. Team captains will meet at midfield for a coin toss. The away team will call the toss. The winner of the coin toss will decide whether they wish to take possession on offense or defend. There will be one possession starting at the defending team's 15 yard line. The offense will have 3 plays to score a touchdown and win the game. If the offense fails to score, the defending team will be awarded 1 point and win the game. An interception in overtime cannot be returned - it results in the defending team winning regardless. The game may not end on a defensive penalty.

## Scoring

Touchdown: 6 points

PAT (Point after Touchdown) 1 point (5-yard line) or 2 points (12-yard line)

Note: A team that scores a touchdown must declare whether it wishes to attempt a 1-pt. conversion (from the 5-yard line, inside the No Run Zone) or a 2-pt. conversion (from the 10-yard line). Any change, once a decision is made to try for the extra point, requires a charged time out. The decision can be changed after a penalty. Interceptions on conversions cannot be returned.

A second consecutive defensive penalty on an extra point will result in the number of points the offensive team was attempting to be awarded to the offensive team and play will resume with the change of possession.

Safety: 2 points

A Safety occurs when the ball carrier is declared down in his/her own end zone. They can be called down when their flags are pulled by a defensive player, their flag falls out, they step out of bounds or they hit the ground with their knee or arm, the quarterback or ball carrier fumbles the ball in his/her end zone, a bad snap resulting in the ball landing in the offense's end zone, or a offensive penalty occurring inside the offensive end zone.

## Live/Dead Ball

A player who gains possession in the air is considered in bounds as long as one foot comes down in the field of play.

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 ball carrier's flag falls out.
- g. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one or no flag(s).
- h. The 7 second pass clock expires.
- i. Inadvertent whistle.

**NOTE: There are no fumbles.** The ball is spotted where the ball made first contact with the ground.

In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has two options:

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

## Protest Rule

A coach has the right to protest one rule interpretation per game. The head coach **MUST** have a copy of the rules present and call a "Protest Time Out". The protest must take place before the next play is started. The official must stop the clock and read the rule in question. If no agreeable solution is determined, then the league director or head official may arbitrate and will have the final say. If the rule was interpreted incorrectly by the official, a time out will not be charged and the proper ruling will be enforced. If a team protests a rule interpretation and is proven wrong, the team will be charged a timeout. If the team does not have a timeout, then that team will be penalized for delay of game.

Only head coaches may approach the referee. Judgment calls cannot be argued.

## Offense Formations

1. Offense must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage (the center) and up to four players on the line of scrimmage. The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.
  - a. One player at a time may go in motion 1-yard behind and parallel to the line of scrimmage.
  - b. No motion is allowed towards the line of scrimmage.
3. 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. Both traditional and shotgun snaps are permitted.

## Running

### No intentional contact of any kind is permitted

1. The ball is spotted where the runner's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball carrier has the ball. Forward progress will be measured by the player's front foot.
2. **The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball.** The quarterback does have the ability to scramble in the back field, but cannot advance the ball beyond the line of scrimmage and have **7 seconds to throw the ball past the line of scrimmage.** The quarterback is the offensive player that receives the snap.
3. Only direct hand-offs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Hand-offs may be in front, behind, or to the side of the offensive player, but must be behind the line of scrimmage. The offense may use multiple hand-offs.
  - a. "Center Sneak" play – The ball must completely leave the center's hands on the snap and he/she must step backwards off the line of scrimmage in order to receive a direct hand-off from the QB before advancing the ball.
4. No laterals or pitches of any kind are permitted.
5. No runs inside the "No Run Zone". A 10 yard penalty will be assessed if ball carrier cross the line of scrimmage.
6. The player who takes the hand-off can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
7. Once the ball has been handed off in front, 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 may not leave their feet to avoid a flag pull. Jumping in the air in a forward motion to advance the ball, while attempting to avoid a flag pull, is not allowed. Lateral moves to the left or right are permitted.
10. 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.
11. **No blocking is allowed at any time.** A block occurs when the "blocker" uses his/her hands, arms, elbows, hips or any part of the body to make contact with or impede the progress of a defensive player attempting to "down" the ball carrier or rush the quarterback. Running out in front of, alongside of, or behind a ball carrier is considered blocking if it impedes the progress of a defensive player toward a ball carrier - no contact is necessary.
12. **Stationary screening** is allowed. Screening is defined as maintaining a position between a defender and the ball carrier. Moving screens are not allowed, screening must be stationary. A player setting a screen, must set his or her screen four (4) yards or approximately (2) running strides from a defender. His or her arms and hands must remain straight down by their sides. No part of their body, except their feet, shall be in contact with the ground throughout the screen. Moving screens as well as sticking a knee, hip, foot, elbow, etc. out and making contact is an illegal block. This also applies to an illegal pick by an offensive player who is not the primary receiver.
13. **Flag Obstruction – Flag Guarding.** All jerseys MUST be tucked in before play begins. The flags must be on the player's hips and free from obstruction. Obstructed flags, whether deliberate or accidental, will be considered flag guarding.
- 14: **Charging** - It is the responsibility of the ball carrier to avoid colliding with defenders that lie in his/her path. Unintentional

contact will not be penalized, provided the ball carrier makes an effort to avoid it. Failure to attempt to avoid contact with a defender (charging) will be penalized. **Intentional contact will not be tolerated, and may also result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty, and/or player ejection. Multiple offenses may result in suspension and/or expulsion from the league.**

## Passing

1. All passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage and must cross the line of scrimmage. A pass may not be received behind the line of scrimmage. A pass may not cross the line of scrimmage and be thrown back over the line of scrimmage. Only one forward pass per down is permitted.
2. Shovel passes are permitted but must be received across 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 is no longer in effect.
  - a. If the QB is standing in the end zone at the end of the 7-second clock, the ball is still returned to the line of scrimmage (LOS)

## Receiving

1. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback, if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
2. A player must have least one foot in-bounds when making a reception.
3. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the **offense**.

## Defense

**NO INTENTIONAL CONTACT of any kind is permitted.**

All defensive players must give the offense a one yard cushion prior to the snap of the ball.

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. This will result in an unsportsmanlike penalty.

## 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. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback may line up anywhere behind the one yard cushion from the line of scrimmage.
2. Once the ball is handed off, the seven-yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may cross the line of scrimmage.
3. The referee will designate a Rush Line seven yards from the line of scrimmage. Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.
  - a. A legal rush is:
    - i. Any rush from a point 7 yards from the line of scrimmage.
    - 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 (breaks the 7 yard rush line prior to the snap), they may return to the rush line, reset and then legally rush the quarterback or they may cease to be a rusher by not crossing the line of scrimmage.
    - 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 to the ball carrier.
  - b. A penalty may be called if:
    - i. The rusher leaves the rushes line before the snap and crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff pass.

- ii. Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped
  - iii. Any defensive player not lined up beyond the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed or handed off
4. Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however, NO contact can be made with the quarterback in any way. Blocking the pass or attempting to block the pass and then making contact with 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 they line up prior to the snap. If the “path or line” is occupied by a moving offensive player, then it is the offense’s responsibility to avoid the rusher. Any 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, then it is the rusher’s responsibility to go around the offensive player and to avoid contact.
6. A sack occurs if the quarterback’s flag is pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball is placed where the quarterback’s feet are when flag is pulled. A Safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team’s end zone.
- Teams are not required to rush the quarterback, seven second clock in effect.
- Teams are not required to identify their rusher before they play, however, if they do send a rusher, the rusher should verify with the official that they are in the correct position.

## Flag Pulling

A legal flag pull takes place when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball.

Defenders can dive to pull flags, but cannot tackle, hold or run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.

It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball carrier’s possession at any time.

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.

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.

Defenders must only attempt to grab an offensive players flags when trying to get them down. If a defender attempts to pull an offensive player’s flags and inadvertently grabs their jersey, the defender must immediately and completely release the jersey before they can reattempt to pull the flag. Failure to do so will result in a holding penalty.

A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball.

## Unsportsmanlike Conduct

1. If the referee witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player may be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the referee’s discretion - a warning may or may not be given. No appeals will be considered.

### **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!**

- 2. Offensive or confrontational language is prohibited. 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 or players will be ejected from the game.
- 3. Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach or official.
- 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.



d. Unsportsmanlike Conduct may be called against a team if a coach, parent, or spectator from that team's sideline violates these rules of good sportsmanship.

## Penalties

Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.

All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted. (spot fouls)

Only the head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarifications and interpretations during a time-out. The Protest Rule can be used to stop the clock to ask for a rule clarification. Judgment calls may not be questioned or protested.

Halves and Games may not end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.

Penalties are assessed live ball then dead ball. Live ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered complete.

Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.

The spot of the ball after all penalties have been assessed will be used to determine whether a 1st down has been gained.

## Warnings

At the officials discretion a warning may be given in place of a penalty to a player or coach for any of the stated rules. Coaches and players should not expect to receive more than one warning if any.

### **PENALTY DEFINITIONS**

For the purpose of this section:

LOS = Line of Scrimmage POI = Point of Infraction

Previous Spot – The spot where the ball was last snapped (LOS)

Succeeding Spot – The spot where the ball is next snapped.

The basic spot in a loose ball play is the previous spot. The basic spot on a running play is the end of the run. A loose ball play includes all action from the time of the snap until a legally thrown ball is caught, intercepted, or incomplete. A running play includes 1) any run or scramble BEHIND the LOS in which the ball carrier does not throw a pass, and 2) BEYOND the LOS, any run and /or any action during any part of a run after a catch of a pass.

### **Charging / Ducking Head into Defender**

A ball carrier must attempt to avoid contact with a defensive player. Deliberately charging an opponent will not be tolerated and if repeated by the same player could result in Unsportsmanlike Conduct and ejection at the discretion of the Officials.

### **Defensive Pass Interference**

Making intentional physical contact with an intended receiver after the ball has been thrown and before it has been touched by the receiver, in order to hinder or prevent a catch. The offensive team may accept the result of the play or the penalty.

### **False Start (offense) / Encroachment (defense)**

This violation occurs when there is any movement by the offense or defense, excluding a player in motion, before the snap of the ball or when a player lines up in the neutral zone before the ball is snapped. Once detected, the official should sound their whistle immediately to kill the play.

### **Flag Guarding**

Dropping a shoulder toward a defender or using an arm to prevent a defender from detaching a flag belt. Hurdling, stiff arming, and diving are all considered flag guarding as well.

### **Blocking/Illegal Screening**

Applies to a stationary block where the “blocker” uses his hands, arms, elbows, hips or any part of the body to make contact with or impede the progress of a defensive player attempting to “down” the ball carrier or rush the quarterback. Screening is defined as maintaining a position between a defender and the ball carrier. Moving screens are not allowed, screening must be stationary. A player setting a screen, must set his or her screen four (4) yards or approximately (2) running strides from a

defender. His or her arms and hands must remain straight down by their sides. No part of their body, except their feet, shall be in contact with the ground throughout the screen. Sticking a knee, hip, foot, elbow, etc. out and making contact is an illegal block. This would also apply to an illegal pick by an offensive player who is not the primary receiver.

#### **Illegal Motion**

This violation occurs when a player in motion moves in the direction of his opponent's goal prior to the snap of the ball or if more than one player is in motion at the same time. However, the player in motion may move parallel to the line of scrimmage or in the direction of his own goal before the snap of the ball.

#### **Illegal Pass or Lateral**

A forward pass thrown after crossing the LOS, any lateral that is not defined as a "Quick Pitch" from the QB as defined above or a player passing the ball from behind the LOS after the player or ball had previously crossed the LOS.

#### **Offensive Pass Interference**

This violation occurs when a player on offense interferes with a defensive player's attempt to intercept a pass or pushes off a defender in an attempt to get open.

#### **Off Sides**

This violation occurs when a player (offense or defense) lines up with any part of his body extending over the line of scrimmage. This is a live ball infraction with play continuing. Do not confuse this infraction with a false start.

#### **Unnecessary Roughness**

An illegal action where a player uses methods or force beyond what is necessary against an opposing player. Repeated Unnecessary Roughness penalties by the same player could result in ejection from the game, at the Official's discretion.

#### **Unsportsmanlike Conduct**

Unsportsmanlike conduct is defined as inappropriate behavior, verbal or other, toward an opposing player, coach, official, spectator or league supervisor and may result in ejection from the game. Inappropriate behavior includes, but is not limited to cursing, explicit gestures, throwing equipment, punching or kicking the bench, etc. This applies to all players and coaches.

#### **Ejection from the Game**

**A player may be ejected from the game for Flagrant Unsportsmanlike Conduct or Personal Fouls (Tackling, Pass Interference, and Charging), Intentionally Tampering with Equipment, Bad Sportsmanship**

Officials will use their discretion and judgment and may eject a player, coach or spectator if the situation warrants. If ejected, a coach and/or player must leave the field within one (1) minute or the game will be forfeited.

Note: If a coach and/or player are ejected, they may be suspended for the next game and potentially removed for the remainder of the season depending on the severity of the offense.

In addition, any parent or spectator that displays unsportsmanlike conduct toward an opposing player, coach, official or league supervisor may be ejected from the playing area. If the parent or spectator does not comply within one (1) minute, the associated team will forfeit the game. Any player, coach, parent or spectator that threatens an official will be subject to suspension for the remainder of the season.

## **Zero-Tolerance Policy**

PLAYMAKERS FFL strives to provide an atmosphere where players, friends and families can feel comfortable enjoying the game and the experience of playing and participating in our league. Any players, teams, or family members that jeopardize that environment will be asked to leave.