



WASHINGTON INTERSCHOLASTIC ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION
EXCEPTIONS TO NFHS FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

RULE 1 - THE GAME, FIELD, PLAYERS AND EQUIPMENT

SECTION 1 - THE GAME

Article 2

- The game will be played on a rectangular field that is **150 feet (50 yards) by 90 feet (30 yards)**, plus two endzones of **30 feet (10 yards)**, no less than **21 feet (7 yards)**.
- The team in possession has a series of four downs numbered 1, 2, 3 and 4 to advance the ball to **two** zones to gain, which are located **17 yards from the endzone on either side of midfield**.

Article 4

- The game is administered by **3 game officials**.

SECTION 2 - THE FIELD AND MARKINGS

Article 1

- The field may be marked by cones on the sidelines to indicate 5, 10, 17 yards and midfield.

SECTION 3 - GAME EQUIPMENT

- Balls used must meet NFHS guidelines for Girls Flag Football.
- The official ball for the State Championship will be announced at a later date.

SECTION 5 - PLAYER EQUIPMENT

Article 1-F

- An unaltered flag belt of the same single solid color, with TWO flags of the same single solid color and a minimum flag dimension of 1 ½ inch by 14 inches.
- All other NFHS uniform requirements apply
 - Points of Emphasis
 - Shorts/pants must be pocketless and must clearly contrast with the color of the flags.
 - Shorts/pants must be a solid color (no stripes) to ensure visibility.

RULE 3 - PERIODS, TIME FACTORS AND SUBSTITUTIONS

SECTION 1 - LENGTH OF PERIODS - HALFTIME INTERMISSION

Article 1

- The running clock time for a game shall be **40** minutes for high schools
- There shall be two-twenty minute halves, with a running clock. There will be clock stoppages during the last two minutes of each half.
- If at the end of the second half, teams have identical scores, the following overtime rules will apply:

- If the clock runs out and teams have identical scores, each team will have a three-try opportunity to score PATs from a zone of the officials choosing. A coin toss will determine which team will attempt these tries first. Points scored are as follows:
 - 5 yds (pass only) - 1pt
 - 10 yds - 2pt
 - 17 yds - 3pt
- Officials pick endzone, both teams play from each endzone
- Penalties on offense will forfeit the attempt, penalties on defense will move offense one section closer, with the opportunity to score the same points on a replayed down
 - Offsetting penalties will replay the down.
- If the score is still tied after one overtime period, teams will swap order and have another 3-try opportunity. That will repeat until one team scores more points than the other.

Article 2

- There will be NO point differential rule, games will not be stopped due to point differential.

Article 6

- Halftime will last 10 minutes, and by mutual agreement of the opposing coaches, can be reduced to a minimum of 5 minutes.

SECTION 2 - STARTING A PERIOD - HALF

- Each half of the game shall be started by a play from a team's ***5-yard line***

RULE 6 - KICKING THE BALL

SECTIONS 1-3

- Kicking of the ball is not permissible. On fourth down, teams will have the option of “punting” by relinquishing possession to the opponents 5-yard line, or “going for it” and forfeiting the ball on the line of scrimmage to the other team if the line to gain is not crossed on fourth down.

RULE 8 - SCORING PLAYS AND TOUCHBACKS

- Touchdown - 6 points
- After a touchdown is scored, teams will have the option to take an automatic 1pt, or try for a 2pt conversion from the 10 yard line, or 3 pt conversion from the 17 yard line.

RULE 9 - CONDUCT OF PLAYERS AND OTHERS

SECTION 3 - BLOCKING

- Screening a defender beyond the line of scrimmage by any offensive player who is not the ball carrier shall be penalized as illegal screening – 10 yards and loss of down.
- Screen blocking by the offense is legal only behind the line of scrimmage and must be stationary and non-contact.

RULE 10 - ENFORCEMENT OF PENALTIES

Penalty Summary:

5-YARD DEAD-BALL PENALTIES	
PENALTY	RESULT
5-Yard Dead Ball Penalties	
Delay of Game	5 yards
Illegal Substitution	5 yards
Encroachment	5 yards
Snap Infraction	5 yards
False Start	5 yards
Disconcerting Act	5 yards
Illegal Formation	5 yards
Numbering violation	5 yards
Illegal Shift or Illegal Motion	5 yards
Illegal Screen Behind the Line of Scrimmage	5 yards
Illegal Advancement (QB Run Rule)	5 yards
Intentional Grounding	5 yards

5-YARD LOSS-OF-DOWN PENALTIES	
PENALTY	RESULT
Flag Guarding	5 yards + Loss-of-Down
Illegal Forward Pass	5 yards + Loss-of-Down
Illegal Screen Beyond the Line of Scrimmage	5 yards + Loss-of-Down
Illegal Hand Off (Hand Off Beyond Line of Scrimmage)	5 yards + Loss-of-Down

5-YARD PENALTIES	
PENALTY	RESULT
Offense False Start	5 yards
Defense False Start	5 yards
Illegal Rush	5 yards
Shielding - Impeding Blitzers with ROW	5 yards

Stripping Ball or Attempting to Strip Ball	5 yards
Illegal Substitution (non-dead ball, too many players on the field during live play)	5 yards
Holding	5 yards
Early Flag Pull (Defense)	5 yards
Pass Interference	5 yards + Loss of Down on Offense; Automatic First Down on Defense
Helping the Runner	5 yards
Attendant illegally on field	5 yards
Nonplayer Outside of the team Box, but not on field	5 yards

10-YARD PENALTIES	
PENALTY	RESULT
Personal Fouls: Unnecessary Roughness, Pushing out of Bounds, Pushing an Airborne Player out of Bounds, Illegal Contact, Tripping, Charging/Bull Blitz, Illegal Body Check/Leading with Shoulder, Tackling	10 yards + Loss of Down on Offense; 10 yards + Automatic First Down on Defense
Personal Foul: Illegal Blocking Technique (physical contact)	10 yards & Loss of Down
Personal Foul: Roughing the Passer (defense)	10 yards & Automatic First Down, Choice by coach to be administered from previous line of scrimmage or added to end of run
Illegal Participation (too many players AND involved in a live play)	10 yards
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	10 yards + Loss of Down on Offense; 10 yards + Automatic First Down on Defense
Runner grasping a teammate	10 yards
Hurdling an Opponent	10 yards

DISQUALIFICATION/EJECTION	
PENALTY	RESULT
Fighting by player or nonplayer	10 yards + Loss of Down on Offense; 10 yards + Automatic First Down on Defense
Any act if unduly rough or flagrant	10 yards + Loss of Down on Offense; 10 yards + Automatic First Down on Defense

A second unsportsmanlike foul by player or non player	10 yards + Loss of Down on Offense; 10 yards + Automatic First Down on Defense
Intentionally contacting a game official	10 yards + Loss of Down on Offense; 10 yards + Automatic First Down on Defense
Tampering with Flags	10 yards + Loss of Down on Offense; 10 yards + Automatic First Down on Defense
Players leaving the Sidelines during a Fight	10 yards + Loss of Down on Offense; 10 yards + Automatic First Down on Defense

ADDITIONAL RULES

BLITZING AND RUSHING THE QUARTERBACK

- An identified (legal signal) Rusher who is at least 7 yards away from the line of scrimmage at the snap may enter the backfield once the ball is snapped and will automatically have Right-of-Way (ROW).
 - This rusher must identify themselves by raising their hand before the snap
- Any other defender at least 7 yards away from the line of scrimmage at the snap may enter the backfield on the snap but will not have ROW.
- Defenders lined up less than 7 yards from the line of scrimmage are not eligible to enter the backfield unless the ball makes contact (touches) with any player other than the player who took the snap.
- Once the ball is transferred to another offensive player other than the Quarterback, the yard rule is no longer in effect and all defenders may cross the line of scrimmage
 - Penalty: Illegal rush, 5-yard penalty, replay the down.

QUARTERBACK RUN RULE

- The quarterback, by definition, is the offensive player who receives the snap.
- The quarterback may not cross the line of scrimmage with the ball as a runner unless they have transferred the ball to another player and then have had it transferred back.
- If the quarterback advances illegally, the play is dead at the spot and a 5-yard penalty is assessed.

NO-RUN ZONES

- Pass-Only Zones are within 5 yards of the end-zone, facing the end-zone.
- When the ball is spotted in the pass-only zone, a forward pass must be executed that breaks the line of scrimmage in order for the play to stand.
- The penalty for not executing a legal pass in this zone is a replay of the down.

ONSIDE PLAY

- An onside play option will be available to teams only in the final two minutes of the second half immediately after scoring and completing a PAT attempt. The option is only available to a trailing team or if the score is tied.
- Option not available after trailing team scores a safety.
- Option not available to team leading in points

- To complete a successful onside play, the attempting team must reach midfield in one play.
- They must reach or pass midfield after all live ball penalties have been assessed.
- The onside play is an untimed down.
- The coach of the team attempting an onside play will inform officials they intend to attempt the play.
- The ball will be spotted on the attempting team's 5-yard line, facing the long side of the field.
- The down is a one play down and is treated like a fourth down, which includes the assessment of penalties.
- For the offense to have a successful try, they must advance the ball to or past midfield. This includes any live ball penalties.
- Dead ball penalties will not be used in the determination of the line to gain being reached.
- If there is a defensive penalty that causes an automatic first down, the offense will receive the penalty yards, but will still have to try the onside kick. The offense will not automatically convert the down in this scenario.
- If the offense successfully converts the down, the new line to gain will be established and the clock operations will return to normal.
- If the offense does not convert, the defense will take over the ball at midfield unless an interception occurs. If an interception occurs, the ball will be spotted wherever the ball is downed. An interception during an onside play may be returned for 6 points with an ensuing PAT attempt.

PASS INTERFERENCE

- Pass interference penalties will be enforced for both offensive and defensive infractions.
- **Offensive Pass Interference**
 - An offensive player may not initiate significant contact that impedes a defender's ability to make a play on the ball.
- **Defensive Pass Interference**
 - A defensive player may not initiate significant contact that impedes a receiver's ability to make a play on the ball. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - Making contact with the receiver instead of attempting to play the ball
 - Hooking or grabbing the receiver
 - Repetitive jersey pulls
 - Using an arm bar to restrict movement

The WIAA would like to thank Jon Appelgate, James Neal, Dave Ralston, and all of the members of the Girls Flag Football Advisory Committee. Their leadership and dedication have been instrumental in the sanctioning of Girls Flag Football in Washington.