

CLMS Flag Football Tournament Rules

THE BASICS

- A coin toss determines first possession.
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5 yard line and has 3 plays to cross midfield for a 1st down. Once a team crosses midfield, it has 3 plays to score a touchdown. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on its 5 yard line.
- If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its 5 yard line.
- All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5 yard line.
- Interceptions may be returned for a Touchdown.

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. 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. The quarterback is the offensive player that receives the snap.
3. Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Handoffs 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 handoffs.
 - 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 handoff from the QB before advancing the ball.
4. Pitches will be permitted. Pitches will be considered runs.
 - a. Dropped or uncaught pitches will be ruled a fumble and marked down where they land.
 - b. In the event of a dropped pitch in the endzone it will result in a safety.
5. The player who takes the handoff or pitch can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
6. Once the ball has been handed off in front, behind, or to the side of the quarterback, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
7. Runners may leave their feet to advance the ball. No head first diving will be permitted.
8. Spinning is allowed.
9. No blocking or "screening" is allowed at any time.
10. Offensive players must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. No running with the ball carrier.
11. Flag Obstruction – All jerseys MUST be tucked in before play begins. The flag must be on the player's hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.

Passing

1. All passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage. A backward pass will be considered a pitch and will be judged that way.

Receiving

1. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback, if the ball has been handed off or pitched behind the line of scrimmage).
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 at the point of interception. Interceptions are the only changes of possession that do not start on the 5-yard line.
6. Interceptions are returnable but not on PAT's.

Rushing the Passer

1. All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of seven (7) 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 defend on the line of scrimmage.
2. Once the ball is handed off or pitched, the seven – yard rule is no longer in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
3. A special marker will be used to designate a Rush line seven yards from the line of scrimmage. Defenders “should” verify that 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 defensive line of scrimmage.
 - ii. A rush from anywhere on the field After the ball has been handed off or pitched by the quarterback.
 - iii. if A rusher leaves the rush line early (breaks the 7 yard area), they may return to the rush line, reset and then legally rush the quarterback.
 - 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 attack the runner.
 - I. A penalty may be called if:
 - i. The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap and crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff or pass – Illegal Rush (5 yds and 1st down)
 - ii. Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped – Offside (5 yds and repeat down)
 - iii. Any defensive player, not lined up at the rush line, that crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed or handed off – Illegal Rush (5 yds and 1st down)
 - II. Special Circumstances:
 - i. Teams are not required to rush the quarterback,
 - ii. Teams are not required to identify their rusher(s) before the play, however if they do send a rusher(s), he must verify with the official that he is in the correct position.

- iii. If the rusher leaves the 7-yard line before the snap, he/she may immediately drop back to act as a defender with no penalty.
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 (10 yards and 1st down).
5. The offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has the right to 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 flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball is placed where the quarterback’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.

Flag Pulling

1. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball.
2. Defenders can dive to pull flags, but cannot tackle, hold or run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
3. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball carrier’s possession at any time.
4. 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.
5. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flag off of a player who is not in possession of the ball.
6. 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 shirt or jersey.

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. There must only be six players on the field for each play.
 - 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.
2. Offensive players must come to a complete stop for one second before the ball is snapped unless he/she is the only player in motion.
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 to a player in the backfield, and the ball must completely leave his/her hands.

Scoring

1. **Touchdown:** 6 points
2. **PAT (Point After Touchdown)** 1 point (5-yard line)
3. **Safety:** 2 points
 - a. 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. A Safety also occurs when there is an offensive penalty in the end zone.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

1. If the field monitor or referee witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any act deemed by the official as unsportsmanlike, the game will be stopped and the player will be removed from the game and can be withheld from subsequent games. The decision is made at the referee's discretion. No appeals will be considered. 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 or players will be ejected from the game.
3. Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coaches 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.

Penalties

Offside- 5 yds, replay down

False Start- 5 yds, replay down

Off. Pass Interference-10 yds., loss of down Def. PI- 10 yds. Automatic 1st down

Blocking- 5 yds from the foul, Loss of down Illegal rush- 5 yds, Automatic 1st down

Unsportsmanlike conduct- 10 yd penalty & either loss of down (off.) or Auto. 1st down (def)