

# NVIAC Flag Football Rules

Rev 20230208

The NVIAC follows an adapted version of the i9 flag football rulebook and teams will play 6-on-6. In this game, the offensive team plays for a first down at midfield and a touchdown in the end zone. Running and passing plays are allowed, *although there are “no-running zones” at midfield and near each goal line. The offensive team can not run a running play when the line of scrimmage is in a “no-running zone.* Additionally, the defensive team covers receivers, rushes the passer and grabs flags to make “tackles.”

## **Section 1: The Basics**

**Coin Toss:** A coin toss determines first possession. The toss will be called by the visiting team before the coin is flipped. The winner may choose one of following two privileges and the loser gets the other: (a) Receive the ball **OR** (b) Goal his team will defend. Prior to the start of the second half, the coach of both teams must inform the officials of their respective choices. The loser of the original coin toss gets first choice.

The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has four 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 run back.

## **Section 2: Field Dimensions**

Field dimensions are: 60-70 yards long X 30 yards wide with 5-10 yard end zones (if space allows). 5 yard no-run zones before mid-field line and goal lines.

## **Section 3: Players/Game Schedules**

Teams must field a minimum of 5 players at all times. Teams have 10 minute grace period after the game start time to field 5 players and begin the official game. If there are less than 5 players on either team, the game will be forfeited by the team with an inadequate number of players. If both teams forfeit the game, it will be recorded as a tie. Teams with forfeited games can use their game time as practice time.

## **Section 4: Timing/Overtime**

Middle school games are played in two 22 minute running time halves. High school games are played in two 24 minute running time halves. Clock will stop in the last minute of each half. 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. Each team has one 60-second and one 30-second time-out per half. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion or if there is an injury on the field. If the score is tied at the end of regulation, teams move directly into overtime. In overtime, a coin flip will determine possession. Both teams will get four plays from mid-field to score. If it is tied after both possessions, during the regular season, the game is over and will be recorded as a tie. In the playoffs, midfield possessions will continue until a winner is decided. Teams will be given one 60-second time-out in each overtime.

### **Section 5: Scoring**

Touchdown: 6 points

Extra point: 1 point (played from 5-yard line)

2 points (played from 12-yard line) Safety: 2 points

\*Extra points will be attempted after a touchdown is scored, if time has run out, in any period.

### **Section 6: Running**

The quarterback **will be** allowed to run downfield with the ball. Any player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage. The offense may also use multiple handoffs. Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a defensive player (no diving). The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is. Laterals and pitches are allowed (handoffs and pitches over the line of scrimmage or downfield are not allowed) (i.e. "the hook and ladder").

*"No-running zones" are located five yards from each end zone and five yards on either side of midfield are designed to avoid short-yardage, power-running situations.* Therefore, when the ball is marked at or on the 5 yard line the ball cannot be run into the end zone, including the extra point. **Note: Shovel passes forward are allowed in the no-run zone.**

### **Section 7: Receiving**

All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off, behind the line of scrimmage). Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.

### **Section 8: Passing**

The "shotgun" is permitted. Shovel passes are also allowed. Interceptions change the possession of the ball at the end of the run back. Interceptions are the only changes of possession that do not start on the 5-yard line. Interceptions on extra points are considered dead balls, therefore cannot be run back for a score.

During all plays, the quarterback has a seven-second "pass clock." If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, play is dead, loss of down.

### **Section 9: Dead Balls**

The ball must be snapped between the legs not off to one side, to start play. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.

The play is ruled "dead" when:

Ball carrier's flag is pulled

Ball carrier steps out of bounds

Touchdown or safety is scored

Ball carrier's knee hits the ground

Note:

There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground.

There are no kickoffs, and no blocking is allowed.

If the flag belt falls off the player without being pulled, a defensive player must at least touch the offensive player for the play to be ruled dead.

**Section 10: Rushing the Quarterback**

All players are eligible to rush the passer immediately; however these players 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 defend on the line of scrimmage. Once the quarterback starts to make forward progress or the ball is handed off, pitched or lateralled, the seven-yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage. A special marker, or the referee, will designate seven yards from the line of scrimmage. Remember, no blocking or tackling is allowed.

**Section 11: Offensive Roughing / Intimidation**

In order to avoid minor or major injuries, coaches should coach running backs to avoid tacklers rather than running them over or ducking their shoulders as they approach the defender who is prepared to make a tackle. This action will be penalized. Coaches should also coach players to run alone and without an intentional individual or group of offensive players leading the ball carrier, thus intimidating and making it harder for a defender to make a tackle. *(It is at the referee & site manager's discretion to sit the child or coach out of the game.)*

**Defensive Roughing:** Tacklers should always go for the flag and should not push, trip or bump a player out of bounds or onto the ground. Coach each child to go for the flag and avoid the push either with the arms or chest. This will be penalized. *(It is at the referee & site manager's discretion to sit the child or coach out of the game.)*

**Section 12: General Sportsmanship/Roughing**

If the field manager or referee witnesses any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game. **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.** There should be no taunting of the other team or excessive "celebration" after a touch down is scored. Trash talking is illegal. Officials or field managers have the right to determine offensive language or behavior from either players or coaches. (Trash talk is talk that may be offensive to officials, opposing players, teams or spectators.)

If trash talking occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player, players or coaches will be ejected from the game. Coaches should never go onto the field to dispute any calls made by the referee, this will warrant either a warning or an immediate ejection from the game.

<b>Section 13: Penalties Defensive</b>	
Offsides	5 yards and automatic first down
Interference	10 yards and automatic first down
Illegal contact (Tackling, holding, blocking, stripping etc.)	10 yards and automatic first down
Illegal FLAG pull (before receiver has ball)	10 yards and automatic first down
Illegal rushing (starting rush from inside 7-yard marker)	10 yards and automatic first down
<b>Offensive (Defense can accept or decline each penalty)</b>	
Illegal motion (more than one person moving, false start, etc.)	5 yards
Illegal forward pass (pass thrown beyond line of scrimmage)	10 yards
Illegal contact (holding, blocking, etc.)	10 yards
Offensive pass interference (illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender)	10 yards
FLAG guarding	10 yards
2nd Delay of game	Clock stops, 10 yards, loss of down

**Section 14: Equipment**

All players on a team must wear similar colored shirts/jerseys. Numbers are not required on the shirts/jerseys. All players must wear a mouthguard while in the game. Each player must be equipped with a belt that, when pulled by the defense, the whole belt comes off. Players are not allowed to wear “pop-flag” belts or belts where individual flags detach when pulled. The proper belt is pictured below. All players on a team must be wearing the same-colored belt.

