



Bridge City Flag Football Rulebook

(Updated 01/20/2020)

I. PLAYERS/GAME SCHEDULES

- 1A. No requirement males vs. females on the field.
- 1B. Teams consist of at least 7 players.
- 1C. League will consist of a maximum of 12 “full” teams of 14 players each.
- 1D. Teams allowed a grace period from the scheduled start time; provided players that arrive late may play in the games upon arrival. In the event a team does not have at least 4 players at 5 minutes after the scheduled start time of the game, that team will forfeit and lose the game with a 21-0 score. The two teams may then scrimmage for the remaining period of time.
- 1F. At least 6 players from each team must be on the field at all times and not more than 7 players from one team may be on the field at one time.

II. ATTIRE/EQUIPMENT

- 2A. Athletic shoes are required. Cleats are recommended. Metal spikes are not permitted. Tennis shoes are permitted. **(Penalty: Ejection and possible suspension at discretion of league management.)**
- 2B. Shirts/Jerseys must be tucked inside shorts, pants, and flag belt.
- 2C. Players must be wearing league issued jersey for every game, no substitutions, with jersey numbers visible. No pockets are permitted on pants / shorts.
- 2D. NO JEWELRY ALLOWED...this includes earrings, necklaces, bracelets, lip/nose/eyelid/etc. studs

- 2E. No red or yellow shorts allowed (nor shorts with red stripes or yellow stripes).
- 2F. Only regular-sized NFL footballs are permitted.
- 2G. For violations of rules 2B-2E, the player will be removed until their attire is in compliance.
- 2H. Football gloves are permitted.

III. GENERAL GAME RULES

- 3A. No intentional contact allowed.
- 3B. No blocking.
- 3C. A coin toss or rock-paper-scissors determines first possession.
- 3D. Games are forty (40) minutes REAL TIME with running clock for entire game.
- 3E. Ball may be snapped directly between legs, between legs in shotgun formation, snapped sideways or snapped sideways in shotgun formation, but must be in contact with the ground prior to the snap.
- 3F. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at their 5-yard line and has four (4) downs to cross mid-field. Once a team crosses mid-field, they will have four (4) downs to score a touchdown.
- 3G. If the offensive team fails to cross mid-field or score, possession of the ball changes and the opposite team starts their drive from their 5-yard line.
- 3H. All possession changes except interceptions start on the offense's 5-yard line.
- 3I. After 20 minutes, there will be a 1-minute half-time, after which teams change sides and play resumes from the point it stopped. There is no change of possession.
- 3J. Each time the ball is spotted a team has thirty (30) seconds to snap the ball. **Failure to snap the ball within thirty (30) seconds will result in a Delay of Game penalty.** The referee or the chief official will give a ten (10) second warning before the ball must be put in play, and count down from 5 to 0.
- 3K. Offense may not snap the ball until the referee or chief official spots the ball, calls "30 seconds", and signals the quarterback that play may resume. **(Penalty: false start, 10 yards or 1/2 distance to the goal, loss of down)**

- 3L. Fields shall be 30 yards wide by 60 yards long with 10 yard end zones for a total field dimension of 30 yards by 80 yards. See the diagram below for more details:



IV. SCORING

- 4A. Games are played for 40 minutes.
- 4B. TD = 6 points, Extra Point (no kicking) = 1 point (5 yards out – passing only); 2 points (12 yards out – run or passing), Safety=2 points. A team who scores 2 points for a safety will also take possession at their 5-yard line.
- 4C. If the defense intercepts an extra point attempt and returns the ball for a score, the defensive team will be awarded points equal to the amount of the extra point attempt.

V. TIME-OUTS

- 5A. Each team has one thirty (30) second time-out per game, in which the play stops. The clock will continue to run.
- 5B. Time-outs **may not** be called within the last five minutes of a game by a team that is winning.

VI. RUSHING THE QUARTERBACK

- 6A. All players who rush the passer must count to 5-mississippi loudly and at a reasonable tempo, as determined by the chief official or referee, prior to rushing the QB. Failure to count out loud results in an illegal rush. (penalty: 10 yards or 1/2 distance to goal from line of scrimmage and automatic first down)
- 6B. Players not rushing the QB may defend on the line of scrimmage.

- 6C. Once the ball has left the QB's hand by either hand-off, pitch, lateral or pass, the 5 second rule is no longer in effect and all defenders are eligible to rush.
- 6D. Players may not line up in a three point stance at any time.
- 6E. Defenders must go for the QB's flag and not his arm. Contact to the passer's arm, hand, or head will be called a foul. (penalty: 10 yards or 1/2 distance to goal from line of scrimmage and automatic first down)
- 6F. Defenders rushing the QB are allowed to raise arms to block passing lanes or to deflect a pass.
- 6H. If flag is pulled before the football leaves the QB's hand, QB is down.

VII. RUNNING

- 7A. The player who receives the snap is designated as the quarterback (QB) no matter where they line up.
- 7B. The QB CAN run the ball after the defense has crossed the line of scrimmage as long as the line of scrimmage is not in a "No-Run Zone." Otherwise, the QB cannot run the ball past the line of scrimmage (penalty if in "no-run zone" or defense has NOT crossed line: 10 yards from originating line of scrimmage and loss of down)
- 7C. Any player who takes a hand-off pitch, or lateral can run with the ball as long as the line of scrimmage is not in a "No-Run Zone". Penalty will be applied if in "No-Run Zone" of 10 yards from the line of scrimmage and a loss of downs.
- 7D. The player who takes the hand-off or lateral can throw the ball as long as he does not step past the line of scrimmage.
- 7E. "No-Run Zones" are located 5 yards before midfield and 5 yards before the end zone in each offensive direction.
- 7F. "No Running Zones" are designed to avoid short yardage power running situations.
- 7G. **Spinning is allowed**, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a defensive player. (penalty: 10 yards from spot of jump and loss of down)
- 7H. The team advancing the football cannot dive in order to gain yardage, either for a first down or touchdown. (penalty: 10 yards from spot of jump and loss of down)
- 7I. The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's BELT is when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.
- 7J. **Ball and flags** must break the plane for a first down and touchdown.

VII. PASSING

- 8A. Only one forward pass is permitted per offensive play, even if it occurs behind the line of scrimmage. (penalty for illegal second forward pass: delayed call, live ball that can be intercepted, 10 yards or 1/2 distance to goal from spot of throw and loss of down)
- 8B. The forward pass must be thrown from behind the line of scrimmage. (penalty for illegal pass beyond the line: delayed call, live ball that can be intercepted 10 yards or 1/2 distance to goal from spot of throw and loss of down)
- 8C. Interceptions change the possession and the ball is placed where the player is downed.
1. Interceptions may be returned.
 2. The ball comes out to the 5-yard line if the interception occurs inside the 5-yard line and is downed **without any attempt to advance it** or if downed in the end zone.

IX. RECEIVING

- 9A. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the QB if the ball has been handed off, pitched, or lateraled behind the line of scrimmage).
- 9B. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. Motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage.
- 9C. Player must have at least one foot in bounds and control of the ball before either foot lands out of bounds in order for it to be a completed pass.
- 9D. Pass may not be intentionally tipped in any direction to another teammate. (result: incomplete pass if caught by teammate; play stands if caught by opponent)
- 9E. If a receiver goes out of bounds, he/she can't be the first to touch the ball. (result: incomplete pass)

X. SUBSTITUTIONS

- 10A. Players may substitute freely between plays.

XI. DEAD BALLS

- 11A. There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where it hits the ground, unless fumbled forward in which case it is spotted at the point it left the player's hands. Anytime the ball touches the ground, it is dead.
- 11B. Play is ruled "DEAD" when:
1. Offensive player's flag is pulled.
 2. Ball carrier steps out of bounds.
 3. Touchdown is scored.
 4. Anything other than the ball carrier's hand or foot hits the ground.
 5. The ball hits the ground.
 6. Ball carrier's belt falls to the ground on its own AND they are then tagged (one hand).
 7. Receiver's belt falls to the ground on its own AND they are then tagged (one hand).
 8. Chief Official or referee calls a "dead ball" penalty.

XII. SPORTSMANSHIP/ROUGHING

- 12A. If the referee or chief official witnesses any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking, flag tying or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped, a penalty will be assessed (see section XIV below), and the player can be ejected from the game. FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.
- 12B. Trash talking is illegal. The chief official has the right to determine language which is offensive. (Trash talk is that which may be offensive to the chief official, the referee, the opposing team, or spectators). Only the chief official can assess penalties and eject players from the game for trash talking.
- 12C. The first warning to one team will serve as a warning to both teams.
- 12D. Any violation of our Sportsmanship Policy includes not only yardage and down penalties, but may also include ejection and/or suspension.

XIII. OVERTIME

13A. Regular Season

1. If the score is tied at the end of forty (40) minutes, teams move directly into overtime.
2. Coin toss or "odd/even" number pick determines possession.
3. Each team receives one play from its own 5-yard line.

4. The team gaining the most yardage on the one play is declared the winner and awarded one additional point even if the result of the play is a touchdown.
5. Order of gain (from greatest to least):
 - 5a. most positive yardage (by spot of flag pull)
 - 5b. Incomplete pass (= 0 yards)
 - 5c. Negative yardage (loss on the play and/or offensive penalty for loss of 10 yards*)
 - 5d. Interception
6. Defensive penalties may be accepted resulting in 10 yards and the option to run an additional play if necessary. Result of following play and the 10 yards from the penalty count towards the overall possession's yardage. A penalty on the offense is deemed as negative 10 yards and loss of down.

*Half distance to goal does not apply in OT. An offensive penalty is -10 yards.

**There are no safeties in OT. The spot of negative yardage is marked where the flag is pulled.

*** If both teams achieve same result, each team runs another play.

13B. Playoffs

1. If the score is tied at the end of forty (40) minutes, teams move directly into overtime.
2. Coin toss or "odd/even" number pick determines possession at the beginning of each overtime period
3. A full ten (10) minute running time period will ensue. (**NOT** sudden death)
4. There will be no stoppage of the clock or timeouts in the overtime period.
5. If the score is tied at the end of overtime there will be a sudden death overtime period with the first team to score winning (maximum 5 minutes)
6. If the score is STILL tied after 15 extra minutes, winner will be determined per Section 13(A) above.

XIV. PENALTIES

14A. All penalties will be called by the referee or chief official and may be declined by the non-penalized team UNLESS otherwise noted below.

14B. All penalties are assessed from the original line of scrimmage, UNLESS otherwise noted below.

14C. A penalty will not move the ball more than half the distance to the goal line.

14D. Defense

1. All defensive penalties are 10 yards or half distance to the goal (whichever is less) and automatic first down.
2. The referee or chief official determines incidental contact which may result from normal run of play.
3. Line of Scrimmage Penalties - these are assessed from the originating line of scrimmage (a.k.a. where the play started)
 - a. Offsides.
 - b. Pass Interference
 - c. Illegal Contact (holding, bump and run, blocking, tackling, pushing of players not in possession of the ball). Note: This includes excessive contact with a receiver even if made at the same time the ball arrives.
 - d. Illegal Rushing (fast or quiet 5-mississippi count, crossing line before finishing count).
 - e. Unsportsmanlike Conduct (any violation of our Sportsmanship Policy which includes not only yardage and down penalties, but may also include ejection and/or suspension)
4. Spot Foul Penalties - these are assessed from the spot where the foul occurred
 - a. Illegal Flag Pull (before receiver has ball) - play continues until another flag is pulled, and offense has option to accept penalty from the spot of foul or take the result of the play where runner is legally downed.
 - b. Illegal Contact (holding, tackling, tripping, pushing of the ball carrier)

5. In cases of illegal contact and/or unsportsmanlike conduct AFTER the completion of a play, the penalty yardage and loss of down will be assessed from the end of the play. (Example: 3rd and midfield from the 10 yard line. Offense gains 5 yards, play is whistled dead, then an offensive player engages in conduct outlined in Section XII above. Result: play was over so it was technically 4th down when the penalty occurred, so the loss of down results in a turnover.)
6. Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.

14E. Offense

1. All offensive penalties are 10 yards or half distance to the goal (whichever is less) and loss of down.
2. The referee or the chief Official determines incidental contact which may result from normal run of play.
3. Line of Scrimmage Penalties - these are assessed from the originating line of scrimmage (a.k.a. where the play started)
 - a. Illegal Motion (more than 1 person moving, false start, moving forward before snap, lining up offside, running in "no-run" zone or QB running if not rushed) *results in a dead ball, play stops
 - b. Delay of Game –10 yards and loss of down (clock will NOT stop). *results in a dead ball, play stops
 - c. Illegal Contact (offensive pass interference, illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender).
 - d. Unsportsmanlike Conduct (any violation of our Sportsmanship Policy which includes not only yardage and down penalties, but may also include ejection and/or suspension)
4. Spot Foul Penalties - these are assessed from the spot where the foul occurred
 - a. Blocking (offensive player intentionally impeding the path between any defender and the ball carrier whether or not contact is made)
 - b. Illegal forward pass (defined in passing section above as either a second forward pass or pass from beyond the line of scrimmage)
 - c. Flag Guarding (Defined as the ball carrier's use of hands, arms, or ball to prevent a defender from pulling their flag. "Natural arm movement" when running is no defense for flag guarding. In order

to prevent the penalty, the ball carrier should keep hands and ball above flag belt level.)

- d. The resulting down after a spot foul is determined by the spot of the ball AFTER progress AND penalty yardage has been assessed. (Example: 2nd and mid-field to gain, progress is made across midfield where a foul happens, and the penalty yardage brings the ball back prior to midfield. Result: 3rd and mid-field to go.)

- 5. In cases of illegal contact and/or unsportsmanlike conduct AFTER the completion of a play, the penalty yardage and loss of down will be assessed from the end of the play. (Example: 3rd and midfield from the 10 yard line. Offense gains 5 yards, play is whistled dead, then an offensive player engages in conduct outlined in Section XII above. Result: play was over so it was technically 4th down when the penalty occurred, so the loss of down results in a turnover.)

14F. Multiple infractions: in the event a team commits multiple fouls on the same play, only ONE penalty will be assessed, NOT added up for more than 10 yards or loss of multiple downs.

14G. Off-setting penalties: in the event that BOTH offense and defense commit fouls on the same play, they will offset and the down will be repeated from the originating line of scrimmage.

14H. Only the team captain may ask the referee or chief official questions about rule clarification and interpretations.

14I. Players cannot question judgment calls.

XV. OFFICIALS AND APPEALS

15A. There will be a minimum of one designated official per game, with a “chief official” on site for the purpose of resolving appeals of rule interpretations. A referee may also be present and assist the chief official.

15B. Each team gets ONE appeal to the chief official per game.

- 1. If the appeal is NOT upheld, this counts as the team’s timeout.
- 2. If the appeal IS upheld, the team is not charged with a timeout.
- 3. If the team has no timeouts and the appeal is not upheld, they will incur a delay of game penalty.
- 4. If the team has no timeouts and the appeal is upheld, there is no penalty.

- 15C. The clock stops during an appeal and resumes as soon as the chief official makes a ruling.
- 15D. Only the captains, referee(s), and chief official can discuss appeals. Any disruption by other teammates will nullify the appeal and the team will be charged with a timeout or delay of game penalty if they have not timeouts.
- 15E. An appeal made by a team with the intent to stop the clock as time is running down late in the game (or at any other time per the referee's judgment) may result in one minute being run off the clock if the appeal is not upheld (in the chief official's judgment), in addition to the loss of timeout or delay of game penalty.
- 15F. Any other abuse of the appeals process not specifically stated above shall incur a penalty including, but not limited to, one or more of the following (in the chief official's judgment):
- 1 delay of game penalty
 - 2 unsportsmanlike conduct penalty and/or warning of ejection
 - 3 ejection
 - 4 time run off the clock
 - 5 forfeit

XVI. HEALTH & SAFETY

- 16A. Players experiencing bleeding must step off the field of play until bleeding is stopped.
- 16B. Clothing with excessive blood needs to be changed or player may not be eligible to re-enter the game.