

SFX ROOKIE DIVISION (7-8 year old)

Flag Football Rules September 2019

For rainout hotline, call 855-739-2569

Goals: The rookie division is meant to be an intro to SFX Flag Football to kids 7-8 years old, teaching them the fundamentals of flag football as well as the rules of the sport. The rookie division consists of practices and games that are coach and parent driven, each game will have 1-2 “teaching” referees who serve to guide the game, insure kids are safe and having fun. As opposed to a traditional referee, teaching referees give guidance and provide assistance where possible.

Game

- 1) At the start of each game, the head coach will meet at midfield with the referees and identify themselves, their assistant coaches, and the team captains. Captains from both teams will join the referee at midfield for the coin toss to determine who shall start with the ball. The visiting team shall call the toss.
- 2) The winner of the coin toss gets to choose to be on offense at the start of the first, or second half. The loser of the coin toss gets to choose which endzone they defend at the start of the first half.
- 3) The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has three (3) plays to achieve a first down. First downs are typically achieved by crossing midfield, however a first down may also be achieved through penalty.
- 4) Once a team achieves a first down by crossing midfield, it has three (3) plays to score a touchdown.
- 5) If a team achieves a first down by crossing midfield, but is then pushed behind midfield as a result of penalty or loss of yardage, the team will not earn another first down by crossing midfield a second time.
- 6) If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on its 5-yard line.
- 7) If the offensive team fails to cross midfield or achieve a first down, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its 5-yard line.
- 8) All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense’s 5-yard line.
- 9) Teams change sides after the first half. At the start of the second half, the team that started the game on defense will possess the ball.
- 10) Coaches are allowed on the field for the Rookie Division.

Key Terminology:

Downs (1-2-3) – the offensive squad has three attempts or “Downs” to advance the ball. They must cross the Line to Gain to get another set of downs or to score.

Live Ball – the period of time that the play is in action. Generally used in regards to penalties, Live Ball Penalties are considered part of the play and must be enforced before the down is considered complete.

Dead Ball – the period of time immediately before or after a play.

Whistle – the sound made by an official using a whistle that signifies the end of the play or a stop in the action for timeout, half time or the end of the game.

Inadvertent whistle – an official’s whistle that is performed in error.

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, chest or forearm.

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

Lateral – a backwards or sideways toss of the ball by the ball carrier.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct – rude, confrontational or offensive behavior or language.

1. Eligibility

1) A player’s age must fall within the specified age-range as of September 1st of the current year. Age will be verified by a valid birth certificate.

2) Every player must play a minimum of every other possession. It is the coach’s responsibility to make sure that all players are getting into the game AT LEAST at this rate. While this is a minimum requirement, it is the expectation that coaches are continually substituting new players into the game in order to insure playing time is equally distributed.

2. Equipment

- 1) The League provides each player with jerseys and flag belts.
- 2) Players may wear sneakers, turf shoes or plastic cleats. While cleats may be worn, only plastic, non-removable cleats are allowed.
- 3) Players may wear gloves.
- 4) Players must remove all watches, earrings and any other jewelry that the officials deem Hazardous.
- 5) Official SFX jerseys must be worn during play.
- 6) Players' jerseys must be tucked into the pants if they hang below the belt line.
- 7) Pants or shorts with belt loops or pockets must be taped.
- 8) Baseball caps are permitted to be worn but may only be worn backwards.
- 9) MOUTHPIECES ARE MANDATORY. Players with no mouthpieces will not be permitted to play.
- 9) Black colored pants/shorts are preferred. Colored shorts or pants are allowed by discretion of referees and/or SFX officials.

3. Timing

- 1) The first half hour will be dedicated to practice time.
- 2) Games are played on a 40 minute continuous clock with 2 twenty (20) minute halves.
- 3) Halftime is 5 minutes long.
- 4) 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. 5) Each team has two 30 second time outs per half.
- 6) Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
- 7) In the event of an injury the clock will stop and then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play.
- 8) If the score is tied at the end of 40 minutes, the game ends in a tie.

4. Scoring

1) Touchdown: 6 points.

2) PAT (Point After Touchdown) 1 point (5-yard line) or 2 points (12-yard line) Note: 1 point PAT is pass only, 2 point PAT can be run or pass.

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.

4) A team that scores a touchdown must declare whether it wishes to attempt a 1-pt. conversion (from the 5-yard line) or a 2-pt. conversion (from the 12-yard line). Any change, once a decision is made to try for the extra point, requires a charged time out.

5. Coaches

1) Coaches are typically volunteer parents or family members helping the players learn and enjoy the game. Parents are encouraged to support the coach at all time.

2) Coaches are allowed on the field to direct players on both offense and defense.

3) Coaches are expected to adhere to the SFX Youth Sports code of conduct.

4) Parents are not allowed to speak to the referees under any circumstances.

6. Live Ball/Dead Ball

1) The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball Dead.

2) The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage. It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on defense or offense enters the neutral zone. In regards to the neutral zone, the official may give both teams a "courtesy" neutral zone notification to allow their players to move back beyond the line.

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

4) 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.

5) Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.

6) Any official can whistle the play dead.

7) 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 flag
- h. The 7 second pass clock expires.
- i. An inadvertent whistle is performed

8) In the case of an inadvertent whistle, down will be replayed from the original line of Scrimmage or the team.

Note: There are no fumbles. The ball is considered dead, spotted where the ball was released, and remains in the possession of the team previously in possession of the ball (except in the case of turnover on downs). Possession is determined by the discretion of the referee.

7. Running

1) The ball is spotted where the ball is when the flag is pulled or the runner steps out of bounds.

2) The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball.

3) Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Offense may use multiple Handoffs.

4) Absolutely NO laterals or pitches of any kind.

5) The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.

6) Once the ball has been handed off in front or behind the quarterback, all defensive players are eligible to rush.

7) Diving is considered flag guarding and will result in a penalty.

8) Spinning is allowed.

9) No blocking or “screening” (running with the ball carrier) is allowed at any time.

10) Flag Obstruction – All jerseys must be tucked in before play begins to the players best ability. The flags must be on the player’s hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.

8. Passing

- 1) All passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage and thrown forward.
- 2) Shovel passes are allowed.
- 3) An illegal forward pass is called when the passer's whole body is over the line of scrimmage when the ball is released.
- 4) There is no intentional grounding, a pass may be thrown away as long as it is a forward pass.
- 5) 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 no longer is in effect.
 - a. If the QB is standing in the end zone at the end of the 7-second clock, the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage (LOS).

9. Receiving

- 1) All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line).
- 2) A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.
- 3) In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
- 4) 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.
- 5) Interceptions are returnable, including interceptions on conversion attempts.

10. Rushing the Passer

- 1) All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of five yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Only 1 player can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage.
- 2) Once the ball is handed off, the five-yard rule is no longer in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
- 3) A special marker., will designate a Rush Line five yards from the line of

scrimmage. Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.

4) A legal rush is:

- i. Any rush from a point 5 yards from the defensive 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, 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 rush..

5) 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 yards LOS and first down).
- ii. Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped-Offsides (5 yards LOS and first down).
- iii. Any defensive player, not lined up at the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed or handed-off-Illegal Rush (5 yard LOS and first down)

6) Special circumstances:

- i. Teams are not required to rush the quarterback.
- ii. Teams are not required to identify their rusher before the play.
- iii. If a rusher leaves the 5-yard line before the snap, he/she may immediately drop back to act as a defender with no offside penalty enforced.

7) Players rushing the Quarterback may attempt to block a pass. However, NO contact can be made with the quarterback in any way.

8) Blocking the pass and intentionally striking the passer will result in a 10-yard penalty.

9) A Sack occurs if the QB's flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball is placed where the ball is when the flag is pulled.

- i. A Safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team's end zone.

11. 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 ball carrier when pulling flags.

3) It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball or pull 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 flags 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 of head, hand, arm or shoulder, or covering flags with the football or jersey.
- 7) If a receiver has one flag when the ball is caught the ball is spotted where the reception was made.

12. Formations

- 1) An offensive team 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.
- 2) Offensive players must come to a complete stop for one second before the ball is snapped.
- 3) Movement by a player who is set 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.

13. 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 will be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the referee's discretion. No appeals!
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 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:
 - i. Yell to cheer on your players, not to harass officials or other teams.
 - ii. Keep comments clean and profanity free.
 - iii. Compliment ALL players, not just one child or team.
- 7) Fans are required to keep fields safe and kids friendly:
 - i. Keep younger kids and equipment such as coolers, and chairs away from the sidelines.

14. Penalties

- 1) The referee will call all penalties.
- 2) Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
- 3) All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted (spot fouls).
- 4) Only the head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players cannot question judgment calls.
- 5) Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.
- 6) Penalties are assessed Live Ball then Dead Ball. Live Ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered completed.
- 7) Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.
- 8) 5 yard penalties include
 - Illegal Equipment
 - Offside
 - Illegal motion (more than one person moving, false start, etc.)
 - Illegal forward pass (throwing a pass beyond the line of scrimmage)
 - Illegal touching (player goes out of bounds and is the first player to touch the ball)
 - Offensive pass interference (illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender)
 - Screening, Blocking or Running with the ball carrier
 - Delay of game
 - Defense Illegal contact (holding blocking etc.)
- 9) 10 yard penalties include
 - Roughing the passer
 - Taunting
 - Unsportsmanlike conduct
 - Charging

Unnecessary roughness

Stripping

Flag Guarding

Defense Illegal rushing (starting rush from inside 7-yard marker)

Defense Illegal flag pull (before receiver has ball)

Note: If a taunting or unsportsmanlike conduct penalty is called against the offensive team after the offense has scored a touchdown, the 10-yard penalty will be marked off from the line of scrimmage of the PAT attempt

9. Defensive Penalties

Offside	5 yards from and replay the down
Illegal contact (Holding, blocking, etc.)	Spot foul, 5 yards from & first down
Illegal flag pull (Before receiver has ball)	10 yards from the LOS and replay the down
Illegal rushing (<i>Starting rush from inside 7-yards</i>)	10 yards from the LOS and replay the down
<i>Roughing the passer</i>	10 yards from the LOS and first down
Taunting	10 yards from the LOS and first down
Unnecessary Roughness	10 yards from the end of the play & auto first down
Stripping	10 yards from the end of the play & first down
Defensive Pass Interference	Spot foul & first down

10. Offensive Penalties

Illegal motion (<i>More than one person moving, false start, etc.</i>)	5 yards from the LOS & replay the down
Illegal forward pass (<i>Pass thrown beyond the line of scrimmage</i>)	5 yards from the LOS & loss of down
Offensive pass interference (<i>Illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender</i>)	5 yards from the LOS & loss of down
Flag guarding	Spot foul, 10 yards & loss of down
Unsportsmanlike conduct	Spot foul, 10 yards & loss of down
Screening, Blocking or Running with the ball carrier	Spot foul, 5 yards & loss of down
Charging	Spot foul, 10 yards & loss of down
Taunting	Spot foul, 10 yards & loss of down
Delay of game	5 yards from the LOS & replay the down
Offensive Unnecessary Roughness	Spot foul, 10 yards & loss of down
Offside	5 yards from the LOS & replay the down

**SFX FLAG FOOTBALL is a noncontact sport.
Intentional bumping by the defense or offense is not allowed!**