SARATOGA NFL FLAG FOOTBALL PROGRAM

OFFICIATING RULE BOOK

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Team Selection

- All registered players must attend a pre-season player evaluation session to ensure fairness and promote a positive competitive gameplay.
- Family members from the same household (siblings) will be placed on the same team, unless a parent or guardian specifically requests the players be separated.
- Requests for team changes for non-family members may be considered but are subject to the discretion of the Board of Directors.
- All coaches will have their children assigned to their team; however, a team may lose or gain draft position based on their child's evaluation and/or draft ranking.
- Two Player Protection Rule: Teams are allowed to protect 2 players during the draft. Players eligible for protection are coach/coach or coach/sponsor.
- Exception Rule: The only exception to the Two-player protection rule would be siblings. (i.e.) coach #1 has two players which are siblings, coach #2 has 1 child resulting in 3 total players protected for the team.
- Competitive Adjustment: Teams which have protected multiple assessed first round draft picks will be competitively adjusted by forfeiting their third and fourth round picks there would pick twice in the fifth round and twice in the final round. If additional players are protected via the exception rule in which that player is assessed higher than the round taken, the team will forfeit their next round pick.

Team Structure

- No of players on the field: **7 v 7**

    - **PreK-K Division**
        - 7-9 players
    - **1-2 Division**
        - 9-12 players
    - **3-4 Division**
        - 9-12 players
    - **5-6 Division**
        - 9-12 players
    - **7-8-9 Division**
        - 7-9 players

Game

- At the start of each game, captains from both teams meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who starts with the ball. The visiting team calls the toss.
- The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense. The loser of the coin toss has the choice of direction. Possession changes to start the second half to the team that started the game on defense.
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 10-yard line and has four (4) downs to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has four (4) downs to score a touchdown.
    - If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, on 4 downs, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its own10-yard line.
    - If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive Team starts at its 10-yard line
    - Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.
- There are no forfeits all games which have commenced will be played to full duration. However, if there is a forfeit the score would be 21-0.
- A coach may only serve as head coach to one team unless authorize by board of directors.
- All **PRE-KK** games will have **ZERO contact** during the game of play.

Officials

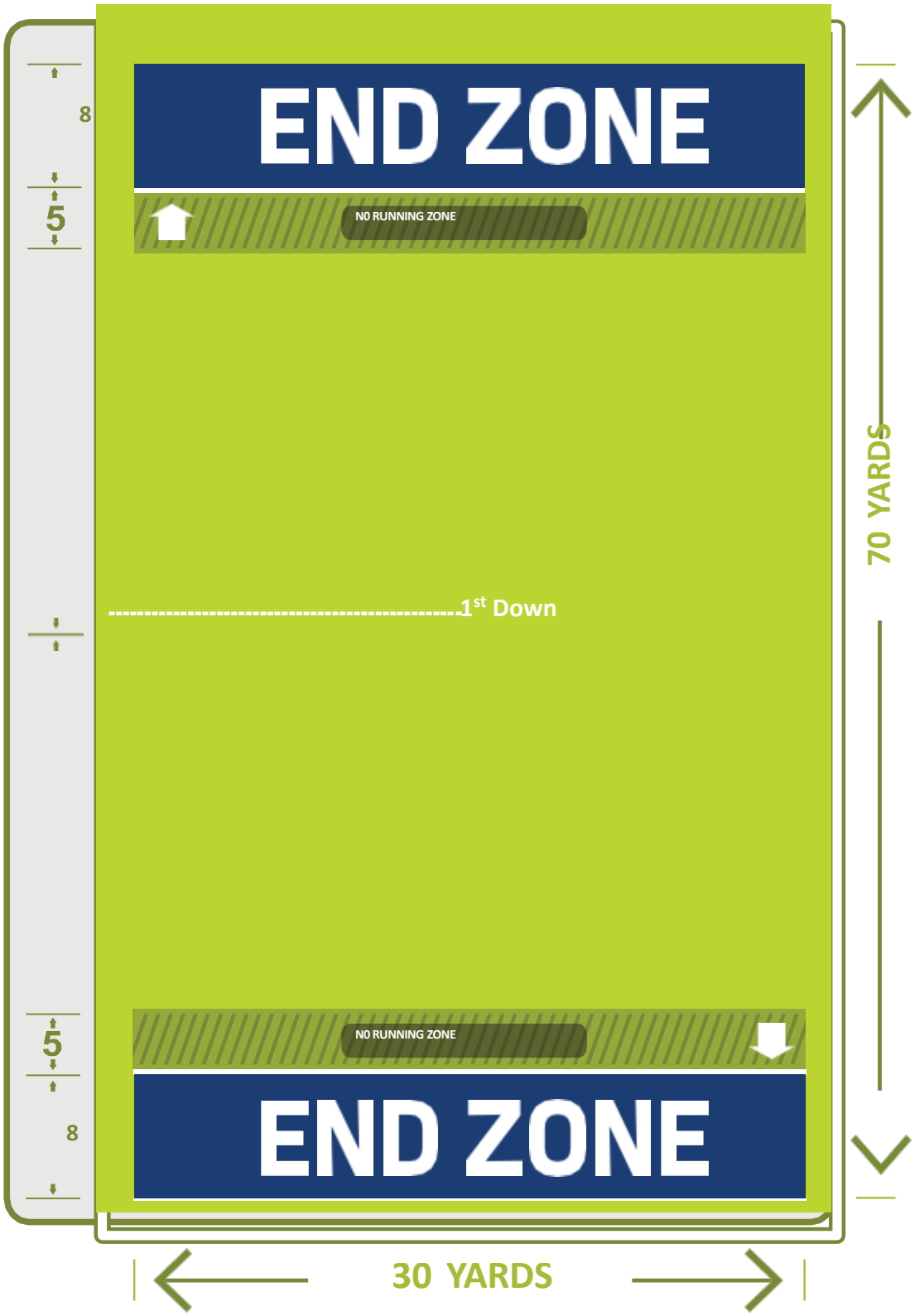
- The League will use paid officials to referee games; however, Pre-K – K teams will generally officiate by their coaches or an official will be assigned if available.
- The League will do its best to supply a Senior Official, Junior Official and Linesman for each game pending available resources.
- Coaches are not permitted to interact with the Junior Officials to question, influence, guide, or dispute any calls.
- An adult supervisor or Senior Official will be available to handle these questions or challenges. The coach may explain their position to the supervisor and request that the supervisor discuss the call with the Officials and render a decision.
- A coach will be given one warning if they display negative behavior toward an Official. A second incident will result in removal from the game and the premises.

Equipment

- All players must wear official NFL FLAG belts and flags. All players MUST wear mouth guards at all times while on the field. Game balls should be age specific.
- Players must wear shoes. Cleats may not be allowed at certain locations. This will be specified by your league organizer or site director. However, cleats with exposed metal are never allowed and must be removed.
- Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads and knee pads. Braces with exposed metals are not allowed.
- Players must remove all jewelry and hard billed hats. Winter beanies are allowed.
- Players may wear soft shell helmets but they must be secured at ALL times while on the field. Players' jerseys must be tucked into shorts or pants if they hang below the belt line.
- We recommend players wear shorts or pants that do not have pockets.
- Participants must bring their own official NFL FLAG belts and mouth guards to the field. Extra belts and mouth guards may be available for purchase.
- NFL FLAG footballs will be provided. a. Flag belts and flags cannot be the same color as the shorts or pants.
    - Flags belts and flags cannot be the same color as the shorts or pants

Field dimensions

- 30 yards wide by 70 yards with two 8-yard endzones.
- No Run zones are located five yards to the endzone in the offense's direction. This rule applies ONLY to the 3-4, 5-6 and 7-8-9 Divisions.
- No-run zones are in place to prevent teams from conducting power run plays. While in the no-run zones (**5-yard imaginary line before the end zone**), teams cannot run the ball in any fashion. All plays must be passing plays, even with a handoff.
- Stepping on the boundary line is considered out of bounds.
- Each offensive team approaches only ONE no-run zones in each drive (one zone 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD).


END ZONE
NO RUNNING ZONE
8
5
1st Down
70 YARDS
NO RUNNING ZONE
5
8
END ZONE
30 YARDS

Timing and Overtime

- Regular Season Games are played on a 50-minute continuous clock with two 25-minute halves, unless one team gains a 35-point advantage which will end the game unless teams agree to continue without changing the score. the clock stops for halftime, injuries and at the official's discretion.
- Halftime is 5 minutes
- Each time the ball is spotted a team has **40 seconds** to snap the ball.
- There are three 60 second timeouts per game.
    - Restriction: **ONLY TWO** 60 seconds timeout can be used in the 2nd half.
- Official can stop the clock at their discretion.
- In the event of an injury the clock will stop then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play.
- If the score is tied at the end of the regulation an overtime period will be used to determine a winner

Overtime format

- Home team calls the toss to determine the team that chooses to be on offense or defense first.
- If a second round of overtime must be played, the team that lost the coin toss will get to choose offense or defense for the start of the second round of overtime. This process continues with teams alternating who gets to choose to be on offense or defense to start out during every round of overtime.
- The referee will determine which end of the field the overtime will take place on.
- Each team will take turns getting one (1) play from the defense's 5-yard line for one point or the defense's 10-yard line for two points. Whether to go for one or two points is up to the offensive team. Whether or not the team that begins on offense converts the team that started on defense gets a chance on offense to win or tie by converting a one- or two-point play of their own.
- Starting with the 2nd overtime, both teams must "go for two" from the 5-yard line.
- Starting with the 3rd overtime, each team will get 1 play from the 5-yard line going out from the endzone. The team with the most yards will be the winner. The team with the most yards will be awarded 1 point added to their final score.
- Final Score will be recorded to include all points scored for each team.
- All regulation period rules and penalties are in effect.
- There are no timeouts.
- Interceptions are returnable in OT, and worth 2 points.
- Interceptions returned for a score in the first or second overtime period, the game is over

Scoring

- Touchdown: 6 points
- PAT (point after touchdown) 1 point (5-yard line) or 2 points (10-yard line)
    - Interceptions returned for scores during regular game play are worth six points, conversions or overtime are worth two points
- **Divisions: (1-2) ONLY**
    - 1-point & 2-point PAT can be a run or a pass
- **Divisions: (3-4, 5-6) & (7-8-9) ONLY**
    - 1-point PAT can only pass {5 yards NO Run ZONE Rule)
    - 2-point PAT run or pass is allowed
- Interceptions returned for scores during regular game play are worth six points, conversions are points scored as run (5 yards 1-point & 10 yards 2-points)

- Safety: 2 points
    - A safety occurs when the ball-carrier is declared down in his/her own end zone. Runners can be called down when their flags are pulled by a defensive player, they step out of bounds, their knee or arm touches the ground, a fumble occurs in the end zone or if a snapped ball lands in or beyond the end zone. A sack or seven second rule in the end zone.
- A team that scores a touchdown must declare whether it wishes to attempt a 1-point conversion (from the 5-yard line) or a 2-point conversion (from the 10-yard line). Any change, once a decision is made to try for the extra point, requires a charged timeout. A decision cannot be changed after a penalty.
- The coaches, officials and scorekeeper must verify the score sheet. If a coach does not verify the score sheet before leaving the field, the scorekeeper will note on that score sheet and the score will be **FINAL**.

Game Clock

Clock Stops on the whistle for the following and will resume on the snap of the ball

- Time Out
- 2-Minute Warning
    - Clock stops at end of play entering into the final two minutes of each half.
- Injury on the Field
    - Clock resumes when injured player leaves the playing field.

Delay of Game

- A 40 second play clock is always in effect. If a team delays beyond a minute, the clock stops, loss of down & yardage will be enforced.
- Game clock for penalty will be started on the spot of the ball for anything outside the 2-minute warnings. Anything inside of 2 minutes before the half or end of game, the game clock will be started when the referee signals the clock to start.

Final Two Minutes of Half

- Clock Stops on the whistle for the following and will resume on the snap of the ball:
    - Time Out
    - Injury on the Field
    - Delay of Game:
        - Offense takes longer than 30 seconds in the huddle within two minutes of end of half, clock will stop, and an additional 30 seconds will be allowed to run a play. If a play is not run in the additional 30 seconds, a loss of down will occur.
- Touchdown
    - Clock resumes after PAT and changes of possession occurs
- Turnover on Downs
- Safety
- Incomplete pass
- Player runs out of bounds.
- Quarterback spikes the ball: Must be immediate and does not satisfy throw requirement.
- Clock Stops on the whistle when a Penalty is called: Once the penalty has been accepted or declined, clock will start on the signal of the official.

Coaches

- Coaches are expected to adhere to **NFL FLAG philosophies**, coaching guidelines and code of conduct.
- Coaches are permitted to coach on the sideline. In addition, two coaches are allowed to remain on the field for **pre-K, 1-2, 3-4**, and only one coach for **5-6, 7-8-9**.
- Coaches must be aware and not impede the play on the field. **Unsportsmanlike Conduct penalty will be issued after the first warning at the discretion of the official**.
    - All team photographers, managers, position coaches, team moms, fans, etc. are required and must remain a minimum of 5 yards off the field in the designated league viewing area.
    - Coaches, this is your responsibility to keep your fans and any other team associated members in the designated areas.

Coaches Challenge

- A team is allowed to use a timeout to question an official's rule interpretation. This has to be done prior to the next snap/down and has to be communicated to the head official.
- If the official's ruling is correct, the team will be charged a timeout. If the rule is interpreted incorrectly, the timeout will not be charged and the proper ruling will be enforced.
- Officials should all agree upon any controversial call in order to give each team the full benefit of each call.
- Officials should all agree in order to change a call on the field that is in dispute
- Officials should resolve all disputes as interpreted by the rule book. If needed a board member may be called for further clarification.

Note:
The Head Official of the game makes the **Final Call**.

Game of Play Offense

- All players as per the rule can line up on the line of scrimmage (LOS) except the QB, but they have to be **3-4 feet apart**, this includes outside the tackle box.

- **When the quarter back (QB) hands off the ball to the Center the transition has to be VISIBLE to the official. The Center will have to run outside the tackle box before crossing the LOS to continue the play, or else the play will be blown dead**.
- All offensive players must break the huddle to be considered eligible for the next play.
- All players must start in a 2-point stance (no 3- or 4-point stances are allowed).
- No Offensive Linemen will be used except for the Center snapping the ball. Players on the line are required to line up no closer than 3 yards to the Center.
- The QB must begin play in the middle of the field with the ball held clearly in front of the body and visible to the defense.
- The QB must use a cadence audible to all on the field for Pre-K-K only. All other divisions do not require a cadence audible to snap the ball.
- The player receiving the ball (snap) from the center cannot rush/run the ball. The ball must be handed off after the snap to advance the ball beyond the line of scrimmage on a rush/run play.
- Play begins when the Center snaps the ball to the QB or (Pre-K-K Division) the QB makes a football move. The QB must have sole possession of the ball to complete the snap.
- The play starts with the ball on the ground in the centers hand or hands in clear site of the defense. Once the ball moves from the centers hand or hands, the play begins. Whomever receives the snap from the center is considered the QB for the play. Both feet of the player snapping the ball must be behind the line of scrimmage. The QB must have sole possession of the ball to complete the snap.
- In the PreK-K Division, there are no snaps. The QB will begin with the ball at the line of scrimmage (LOS) or in a shotgun formation.
- Only one offensive player may be in motion during a single play. All other players must remain set until the ball is snapped or the QB makes a football move.
- Ball carriers may use spin moves to avoid their flag being pulled.
- Flag Guarding, Stiff Arm and Leaping into defenders is not allowed to avoid de-flagging.
- No diving allowed.
- Offensive players must attempt to avoid contact with a defensive player that has established position.
- Offensive players may lateral the ball (overhand or underhand) at any time during an offensive play.
- Only one forward pass is allowed per down.
- To satisfy the throw requirement, the offensive player must attempt an overhand forward pass. Any overhand forward pass outside of the tackle box or across the line of scrimmage whether complete or incomplete satisfies the throw requirement. The offensive player may throw the ball out of bounds to satisfy the throw requirement. The tackle box is defined as two player width or 3 yards to each side of the ball or center position. Shovel pass does not satisfy a pass attempt. A sack of the QB is not considered a pass or run.

- If the offense and defense both catch the ball simultaneously, possession goes to the offense at the spot of the catch. One foot in bounds is required for a completion.
- No single player can rush/run the ball on two consecutive plays.

Live Ball / Dead Ball

- The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.
- 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 regard to the neutral zone, the official may give both teams a "courtesy" neutral zone notification to allow their players to move back behind the line of scrimmage.
- A player who gains possession of the ball in the air is considered in bounds as long as the first foot or a body part other than the hand contacts the ground in the field of play with possession.
- 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. This will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.
- Substitutions may be made on any dead ball. Any official can whistle the play dead.
- Play is ruled "dead" when:
    - The ball hits the ground.
        - If the ball hits the ground as a result of a bad snap, the ball is then placed where the ball hit the ground.
    - The ball-carrier's flag is pulled.
    - The ball-carrier steps out of bounds.
    - A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored.
    - The ball-carrier's knee or arm hits the ground.
    - The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one or no flag(s).
    - The 7 second pass clock expires.
    - Inadvertent whistle.
    - Ball-carrier leaves their feet diving or to hurdle a player.

Note:

There are no fumbles, ground contact does not have to be made. If the ball is fumbled forwards, then it will be spotted where the ball carrier lost possession. Loss of possession is a **DEAD BALL**.

Inadvertent whistle occurs:

- If an inadvertent whistle is blown the offensive team may choose to take the ball at the spot of the whistle and play the next down or replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.

Running

- The ball is spotted where the ball is when the flag is pulled.
- The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball. The quarterback is the offensive player who receives the snap.
- 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.
    - Any player who receives a handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
    - Once the ball has been handed off, in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, the **seven-second passing clock** is eliminated and all defensive players are eligible to rush
- Definition of a "Legal Handoff" - Total loss of possession directly from 1 offensive play to another.
- No-run Zones are located 5 yards before each end zone are designed to avoid short-yardage power running situations. Teams are not allowed to run in these zones if the subsequent line is LIVE. (Reminder: Each offensive team approaches only ONE no-run zones in each drive – one 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD).
- Runners are not permitted to dive or hurdle any player while advancing the ball.
- If a team runs the same player on two consecutive downs the defense can take the play as is or it will be considered a loss of down and the ball will be placed at the original line of scrimmage.
- Ballcarriers may leave their feet and the play will continue for spinning, jump cuts, QB's passing progression or if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid a collision with another player and the play will continue without stoppage. However, if while leaving the ground, contact is made **unnecessary roughness** penalty may be enforced by the official.
- **Flag obstruction** – All jerseys MUST be tucked in before play begins. The flags must be on the player's hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.
- Running through or over a defensive player will result in the stoppage of play at the point of contact. (Roughing Penalty at discretion of Official)
    - Exception: if the ball breaks the plane of the goal line before the flag is pulled the player is awarded a touchdown.

Passing

- All passes must be thrown with one hand from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward and ball out of hand prior to breaching the line of scrimmage to include outside the tackle box.
    - Intentional grounding is a spot foul resulting a loss of down and a Safety if occurs in the end zone.
    - All passes that do not cross the line of scrimmage, or outside the tackle box, whether received or not, are illegal forward pass.
    - The quarterback may throw the ball away to avoid a sack. Pass must go beyond the line of scrimmage.

- The quarterback has a seven-second "pass clock." If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, the play is dead, the down is consumed and the ball is placed at the spot of the foul. Once the ball is handed off, the 7-second rule is no longer in effect.
    - If the QB is standing in the end zone at the end of the 7-second clock, the result of the play is sack and a SAFETY is called.
    - Run-Pass-Option (RPO) 7-second count start from the snap of the ball and the ball has to cross the line of scrimmage within 7-seconds.

Passing Requirements

- Pre-K-K & 1-2 Divisions must pass the ball a minimum of 1 of every 4 downs.
- 3-4, 5-6 & 7-9 Divisions must pass the ball a minimum of 2 of every 4 downs.

    - 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. All motion must be lateral to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted toward the line of scrimmage.
    - A player must have at least one foot or other body part in bounds, contacting the ground first with possession.
    - In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
    - Interceptions are returnable. If returned for a score during regular game play, the score will be worth six points, two points if returned during conversions and/or overtime.
    - A turnover on downs will result in the defensive team starting on their own 10-yard line. There are no punts.
    - Interceptions, the ball may be advanced on an interception. If the player advances the ball beyond midfield but fails to score a touchdown, the defensive team will

gain possession at midfield. If the player does not advance the ball beyond midfield, possession begins at the 10-yard line.

- Fumbles/Drops
- Each player is required to receive the ball at least once during the duration of the game.
- To satisfy the throw requirement, the offensive player must attempt a pass. A sack of the QB is not considered a pass or run.
- Any overhand **forward** pass outside of the tackle box or across the line of scrimmage whether complete or incomplete satisfies the throw requirement. The offensive player may throw the ball out of bounds to satisfy the throw requirement. The tackle box is defined as two player width or 3 yards to each side of the ball or center position.

Catching

- If the offense and defense both catch the ball simultaneously, possession goes to the offense at the spot of the catch.
- One foot in bounds is required for a completion.

Rushing the passer

- All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players from behind the cone can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback can defend from 3 yards of the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball is handed off all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
- A special marker, or the referee, will designate a rush line seven yards from the line of scrimmage. Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.
  - **A legal rush is**:
    - Any rush from a point 7-yards from the defensive line of scrimmage.
    - A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off by the quarterback.
  - **A penalty may be called if**:
    - The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap and crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff or pass – illegal rush
    - If the defense crosses the line of scrimmage the official throws a flag but the play will continue.
    - The offense has the option to replay the down or decline the penalty.
    - Defensive players that leave their position and move inside the 7-yard blitz cone and rush the QB will be called for a penalty. The Offense will

have the option to accept the penalty and replay the down or decline the penalty and keep the results of the down.

- If the offense draws the rusher(s) to jump the eight-yard marker prior to the snap of the ball, that rusher(s) **CANNOT** rush during that play. However, any other defender that is seven yards back may rush instead. Jumping the rush is not a penalty until the rusher crosses the line of scrimmage prior to the handoff or passed ball.

- Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however, contact to the QB, unless ruled incidental by the official, would result in a roughing the passer penalty.
- A Blitz can be blocked
- A sack occurs if the quarterback's flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball will be spotted where possession of the ball is once the flag is pulled.
    - A Safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team's end zone.
- No stunting is allowed
- No single player can rush/run the ball on two consecutive plays.

Special circumstances

- Teams are not required to rush the quarterback with the seven second clock in effect.
- Teams are not required to identify their rusher before the play.

Flag Pulling

- A legal flag pull takes place when the ball-carrier is in full possession of the ball.
- Defenders can dive to pull flags but cannot tackle, hold or run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball-carrier's possession at any time.
- A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball.
- 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, ball, arm or shoulder or intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey.
- If a player's flag falls off without being pulled, play continues until touched with at least one hand by a defensive player or remaining flag is pulled

Formations

- Offenses must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage (the center) and the quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.
    - Teams may shift formations prior to the snap as long as they are set for at least 1 second before the ball is snapped.
    - One player at a time may go in motion at least 1 yard behind the line of scrimmage.
- 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.

End of Down/ Downed Player

- A defensive player pulls the ball carrier's flag.
- If any offensive player drops the ball on any down:
    - Down is complete at spot of drop. A drop is defined as losing control of once possessed football or an unsuccessful transfer of the ball between two players resulting in the ball touching the ground.
    - In the Pre-K-K Division a team suffers a loss of down after two dropped hand-off attempts.
    - The offensive ball carrier falls
    - The ball carrier steps on or over the out of bounds line.
    - An incomplete forward pass.
    - If a player's flag falls off without being pulled, play continues until touched with at least one hand by a defensive player or remaining flag is pulled.
    - Running through or over a defensive player will result in the stoppage of play at the point of contact. (Roughing Penalty at discretion of Official)

Seven (7) Second Rule

- The QB is allowed 7 seconds from when the ball is snapped to attempt a pass. If the QB fails to attempt a pass in the allotted 7 second time frame, the QB will be considered "sacked" and the down will end.

RPO

- If the QB hands the ball off to the RB or WR behind the line of scrimmage where the player receiving the hand off attempts to pass the ball, that player is still allowed the original seven (7) seconds from time of snap to attempt the pass. If after 7 seconds, the pass has not been attempted, a sack occurs and the ball will be placed at the spot of the sack.

Ball Spot

- When de-flagged, a player is marked down where the flag is pulled (not the position of the ball). There is no forward progress granted after being de-flagged.
    - **Exception**
        - if the ball breaks the plane of the goal line before the flag is pulled the player is awarded a touchdown. On negative yardage situations, the ball is placed at the spot of the "flag pull". The ball is not returned to the original line of scrimmage. (This can be modified at the Pre-K-K level depending on game situation)

Substitution

- Players can substitute at any time and play will resume as soon as the line is set.

Inadvertent Whistle

- If an inadvertent whistle is blown the offensive team may choose to take the ball at the spot of the whistle and play the next down or replay the down from the original line of scrimmage, unless during the play there is a change of possession.

Offsetting Penalties

- In the case of offsetting penalties, the play will be re-played from the original LOS. Offsetting penalties are penalties on each team for the same play.

Blocking

All offensive players may block defensive players throughout the play. All blocking must be open hand, above the waist and to the shoulders/chest area.

- A violation of this rule results in a replay of the down.

Game of Play Defense

- The defense must be a minimum of 3 yards behind the line of scrimmage.
- The defensive player must hold up the flag of the de-flagged offensive player and wait for a coach or Official to retrieve it for ball placement.
- No stunting allowed.
- Defensive player(s) that start behind the "Blitz Cone" can be blocked by the offense regardless of pass play or running play.
- Defensive backs may cross the line of scrimmage outside of the tackle box after the ball is snapped if they do not go in the direction of the QB.
- If the QB fakes a hand off, defensive backs cannot continue to rush in and must drop back into coverage.
- All defensive players may drop back into coverage.
- Defensive players allowed to rush the QB may block a forward pass but cannot contact the throwing arm of the QB. Hitting the throwing arm or knocking down the QB will result in a roughing the passer penalty.
- All defensive players may cross the line of scrimmage once the ball has been handed off or the ball leaves the QB's hands.
- There is no tackling. Defensive players may not forcefully contact an offensive player with open hands, shoulders or their head to force them out of bounds or knock them to the ground. They may not wrap up a player from behind and drag them to the ground.
- No Stripping of the ball is allowed: Defensive players are not allowed to punch or strip the ball out of the hands of the offensive player.
- Blitz Cone
- A blitz cone will be placed 7 yards from the line of scrimmage and will be reset by the Official after each play.
- Defensive players that leave their position and move inside the 7-yard blitz cone and rush the QB will be called for a penalty.
- One or more players may be lined up behind the 7-yard blitz cone at the time of the snap and all have the option to rush the Quarterback. Blitzers may be blocked by Offense.
- Turnovers
- Turnover on Downs
    - A turnover on downs will result in the defensive team starting on their own 10-yard line. There are no punts.
- Interceptions
    - The ball may be advanced on an interception. If the player advances the ball beyond midfield but fails to score a touchdown, the defensive team will gain possession at midfield.
- If the player does not advance the ball beyond midfield, possession begins at the 10-yard line.

- Fumbles/Drops
    - There are no fumbles.
- The term “dropped”, “drop” or “drops” does not refer to an incomplete forward pass. A “drop” is when the ball contacts the ground during the snap, lateral or if a player who once had possession and loses possession of the ball.
    - A dropped ball, not including an incomplete pass, is placed at the spot of the drop. The ball cannot be advanced on a drop.
- If a player drops the ball, not including an incomplete pass, in their own end zone, the result is a Safety.
- If a player drops the ball, the ball cannot be recovered and advanced by either team.

Penalties

- Any member of the officiating crew can call penalties, with the referee having the final decision.
- Any member of the officiating crew has the authority to walk off penalty yardage & spot equipment (including balls, cones, etc.)
- Judgement calls are non-disputable.
- Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
- All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted. (Spot fouls)
- Only the team captain or head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players may not question calls.
- Games or halves may not end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.
- Penalties are assessed live ball then dead ball. Live ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered complete.
- Spot fouls in end zone: Defensive (Ball on one-yard line, first down)/Offensive (Safety)
- With over 2 minutes remaining in the half, the clock will not stop for penalties unless signaled from the referee.
- With under 2 minutes remaining in the half, the clock will stop on all penalty whistles & not resume until signaled by the referee.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

- The Unsportsmanlike Conduct decision is made by the officiating crew alone and shall not be contested by either coach. Please keep in mind, any flagrant action will be called as an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.
- If a board member or official witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, a five-minute game clock penalty will be issued to the offender. Additional Unsportsmanlike conduct penalty on the same player within same game, player is ejected from game and suspended for following game.
- The decision is made at the referee's discretion. No appeals will be considered. **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!** Acts of this nature which are considered unsportsmanlike include but not limited to: Intentionally stepping on a player while down, grabbing a player by the neck or collar of the jersey and throwing him into the ground, picking up and throwing or driving down/into to the ground, striking a player after or during the play, egregious or repetitive offenses, etc.
- In addition to the physical actions indicated above athletes that engage in serious verbal infractions are subject to a penalty and discipline in a similar manner. These actions may include, but are not limited to: taunting or other form of disrespect to a teammate or opposing player, arguing or swearing at another player, coach, or Official, throwing any object in frustration, etc.

- Players are not allowed to participate in any excessive touchdown celebrations (this does not include clapping hands, cheering, or congratulating the scoring player). Excessive is determined by the Official. Examples of excessive are: Celebrations of elongated period of time, taunting etc.
- Any player or team that does so, will be given a **warning 1st** if the behavior continues a penalty will be enforced that will result in the opposing team starting at midfield rather than the 10-yard line.
- If a coach feels the game is going in a direction that is unacceptable, they are asked to call an official's timeout and ask for the board member on duty. That member will come to the field and help clarify or de-escalate the situation. The Officials can do this and either coach can do this.
- Offensive or confrontational language is **NOT** allowed. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the officials will determine if an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty will be assessed a five-minute penalty will be warranted.
- Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach or official. Ball-carriers MUST make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.
- Defenders must give free releases up to 3 yards from the line of scrimmage to offensive players and are not allowed to run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.
- **ROUGH PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.**

Illegal Procedure (Defensive)

- **Blitz Cone Penalty/Illegal Rush:** +3 yards from original line of scrimmage & replay of down.
    - Defensive players that leave their position and move inside the 7-yard blitz cone and rush the QB will be called for a penalty. The Offense will have the option to accept the penalty and replay the down or decline the penalty and keep the results of the down.

Defensive Penalties

Holding/ Illegal Block: +3-yard penalty from the original line of scrimmage and replay down or offense may choose to decline and take result of the play.
Any flagrant acts will be considered as Unnecessary Roughness or Unsportsmanlike Conduct as deemed by the Official

Intentional Pre-Mature Flag Pulling: +3 yards from the spot of the foul & automatic first down.

- If a defender pulls the flag of an intended receiver before the ball is caught by the offense.
- If a defender pulls a flag of an offensive player (not the intended receiver or runner) and that offensive player later possesses the ball in the play, he shall be declared down if a defender touches the ball carrier with at least one hand between the top of the shoulders and above the knees.

Offsides/Encroachment: +3 yards from original line of scrimmage or offense may decline penalty for result of the play.

- Encroachment: When contact is made prior to the snap with an offensive player after crossing the neutral zone the play will be blown dead immediately and yardage enforced.

Pass Interference:

- Ball will be placed at the spot of the foul, and an Automatic first down. This is awarded as an untimed down if the penalty occurs when time expires on the game clock. If the penalty occurs in the end-zone, replay the down from the 1-yard line. The same rules apply on a PAT attempt.

Illegal Touching: +3 yards from original line of scrimmage and automatic first down.

- Illegal Touching: Any defensive player who illegally goes out of bounds and re-enters the field of play who is the first to make a play on the ball or any offensive player in possession of the ball.

If the Defense is called for too many players, the Offense will have the option to decline the penalty and accept the results of the play or accept the penalty.

Personal Foul: Roughing the Passer: +3 yards from original line of scrimmage & automatic first down. 5-minute out of game penalty enforced

Personal Foul: Unnecessary Roughness: +5 yards from original line of scrimmage & automatic first down.

- Any flagrant acts will be considered as **Unnecessary Roughness or Unsportsmanlike** Conduct as deemed by the Official

Defensive Unsportsmanlike Conduct

- Automatic first down. Ball will either be placed at 10-yard line or midfield, depending on where the last snap occurred.
- The offender will be issued a 5-minute off-field penalty.
- Any unsportsmanlike conduct/behavior such as, but not limited to, taunting, excessive celebration, vulgar language, poor body language, lack of sportsmanship (i.e. throwing equipment, disrespectful hand gestures, arguing/complaining to officiating crew, etc.).
- Receiving two Unsportsmanlike Conduct penalties (players and/or coach) occurring in the same game will result in disqualification for the remainder of the game, plus any additional disciplinary action from the Saratoga NFL Flag Football League.
- All final outcomes and decisions are left to board review.
- The ball will be placed at mid-field if the play began before mid-field in the offensive zone.
- The ball will be placed at the defensive's own 10-yard line if the play began after mid-field in the defensive zone.
- Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal (i.e. if the ball is within the 10-yard line of the end-zone, the ball will be placed half the distance to the goal).

Illegal Procedure (Offensive)

Quarter Back Run Rule: -3 yards from original line of scrimmage & Loss of Down.

- If the Quarterback is the player receiving the snap of the ball from the center and runs the ball beyond the line of scrimmage for a gain, the play will be whistled dead, and the ball will be returned to the original line of scrimmage and the play will result in loss of down.

Consecutive Run Rule: -3 yards from original line of scrimmage & Loss of Down.

- If a team runs the same player on two consecutive downs the defense can take the play as is or it will be considered a loss of down and the ball will be placed at the original line of scrimmage.
- **Note:**
  - for the purposes of this rule, if a pitch or lateral occurs within a play, the last player with the ball is deemed the runner. A player is deemed the runner if they receive a pitch or handoff from the QB, or subsequent lateral, and does not throw the ball.

False Start or Illegal Motion: -3 yards penalty on the offense or the defense can decline the penalty and accept results of play.

Flag Guarding: -3 yards from spot of flag guarding.

- Ball will be marked down at the spot of the flag guarding. If done multiple times by the same player, it may be considered unsportsmanlike conduct and considered for a loss of down.

Pass Rule-Minimum: -3 yards from original line of scrimmage & loss of down.

- If offense fails to meet Pass-Rule requirements, they will be assessed a penalty enforced as a loss of down and -3 yards.
- A violation of this rule results in a replay of the down for Pre-K-K & 1-2 Divisions. A loss of down will be enforced for 3-4, 5-6 and 7-9 Divisions.

Return Team: Interception Penalty

- Live Ball Penalty If a penalty occurs on the return team during an interception return, the ball will be placed on the side of the field (10-yard line or midfield) where the penalty occurred.

Illegal Run: -3 yards from the original line of scrimmage and loss of down

- Anytime the offense runs the ball inside the "no run zone"

Diving: -3 yards from the original of scrimmage and replay the down.

Offensive Penalties

Delay of Game: -3 yards from original line of scrimmage & loss of down

- A 40 second play clock is always in effect. If a team delays beyond a minute, the clock stops, loss of down & yardage will be enforced.
- Game clock for penalty will be started on the spot of the ball for anything outside the 2-minute warnings. Anything inside of 2 minutes before the half or end of game, the game clock will be started when the referee signals the clock to start.

Offsides/False Start/Illegal Motion or Illegal Situation: -3 yards from original line of scrimmage, replay the down.

Holding/Illegal Block: -3-yard penalty from original line of scrimmage and replay the down.

- Any flagrant acts will be considered as Unnecessary Roughness or Unsportsmanlike Conduct as deemed by the Official Intentional Grounding - Standard NFL

Intentional Grounding

- A receiver must be in the vicinity of an attempted pass for a valid pass attempt. Penalty is loss of down and pass attempt does not satisfy towards throw requirement.

Illegal Forward Pass: -3 yards from original line of scrimmage & Loss of Down

- Any pass or pass attempt after crossing the line of scrimmage.

Pass Interference: -3 yards from original line of scrimmage and Loss of Down. Defense may decline and take the results of the play.

Illegal Touching: Loss of Down and replay from original line of scrimmage.

- If a player illegally goes out of bounds, comes back in, and then catches the pass.
- This penalty does not comprise a loss of yardage, but the offense loses a down.
- If a player goes out of bounds and catches the pass out of bounds, it is ruled an incomplete pass.

Illegal Substation/Too Many Players on the Field: -3 yards from original line of scrimmage and a loss of down.

- A penalty will be called if the number of players in the huddle exceeds the maximum allowed for the offense on the field at that time (i.e. in a 7v7 game, this would be called when the offensive team breaks the huddle with 8 or more players).

Personal Foul / Unnecessary Roughness: -5 yards from original line of scrimmage and loss of down.

- If the penalty occurs on 4th down, the result will be a turnover on downs.

Charging

- Offensive ball carrier must attempt to slide or avoid contact with opposing defender and may not make forward contact by running through said defender.
- Any lowering of the shoulder to initiate contact and/or malicious contact will be enforced as an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty and not unnecessary roughness.

Offensive Unsportsmanlike Conduct

- Loss of Down. Ball will either be placed at 10-yard line or midfield, depending on where the last snap occurred.
- The offender will be issued a 5-minute off-field penalty. Any unsportsmanlike conduct/behavior such as, but not limited to, taunting, excessive celebration, vulgar language, poor body language, lack of sportsmanship (i.e. throwing equipment, disrespectful hand gestures, arguing/complaining to officiating crew, etc.)
- Receiving two Unsportsmanlike Conduct penalties (players and/or coach) occurring in the same game will result in disqualification for the remainder of the game, plus any additional disciplinary action from the Saratoga NFL Flag Football League.
- All final outcomes and decisions are left to board review. The ball will be placed at the offensive's own 10-yard line if the play began before mid-field in the offensive zone.
- The ball will be placed at mid-field line if play began after mid-field line in the defensive zone.
- Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal (i.e. if the ball is within the 10-yard line of the end-zone, the ball will be placed half the distance to the goal).

Coaches CODE of CONDUCT

- Coaches are expected to adhere to NFL FLAG philosophies, coaching guidelines and code of conduct.
- Coaches are permitted to coach on the sideline. In addition, two coaches are allowed to remain on the field for Pre-K, 1-2, 3-4, and only one coach for 5-6, 7-8-9.
- Coaches must be aware and not impede the play on the field. Unsportsmanlike Conduct penalty will be issued after the first warning at the discretion of the official.
- All team photographers, managers, position coaches, team moms, fans, etc. are required and must remain a minimum of **5 yards off the field** in the designated league viewing area.
- Coaches, this is your responsibility to keep your fans and any other team associated members in the designated areas.
- Coaches are not permitted to interact with the Junior Officials to question, influence, guide, or dispute any calls. An adult supervisor or Senior Official will be available to handle these questions or challenges.
- The coach may explain their position to the supervisor and request that the supervisor discuss the call with the Officials and render a decision. A coach will be given **one warning** if they display negative behavior toward an Official or opposing coach.
- A second incident will result in removal from the game and the premises.

Parents, Legal Guardian & Fans CODE of CONDUCT

- Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship as well as fans are required to keep fields safe & a kid friendly environment.
- Yell to cheer on your players, not to harass officials or other teams.
- Keep comments clean and profanity free.
- Compliment ALL players, not just one child or team.
- Keep younger kids and equipment such as coolers, chairs and tents a minimum of 10 yards off the field in the end zone area.
- If a fan/parent gets ejected from a game they must leave the facility. They will not be permitted to attend the next game on the schedule.

I (and my guests) will be a positive role model for my child and encourage sportsmanship by showing respect and courtesy, and by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, officials and spectators at every game, practice or other sporting event.

I (and my guests) will not engage in any kind of unsportsmanlike conduct with any official, coach, player or parent such as booing and taunting, refusing to shake hands, or using profane language or gestures.
I will not encourage any behaviors or practices that would endanger the health and well-being of athletes.

I will ask that my child treat other players, coaches, officials and spectators with respect at all times regardless of race, creed, color, sex or ability.

I will never ridicule or yell at my child or other participants for making a mistake or losing a competition.

I will respect the officials and coaches for their authority during games and practices.

I will refrain from coaching my child or other players during games and practices, unless I am one of the registered coaches for the team or specifically asked by one of the Team's coaches for assistance.

Terminology

Boundary Lines	The outer perimeter lines around the field. They include the sidelines and back of the end zone lines.
Line of Scrimmage	(LOS) an imaginary line running through the point of the football and across the width of the field.
Line-to-Gain	The line the offense must pass to get a first down or score.
Rush Line	An imaginary line running across the width of the field seven yards (into the defensive side) from the line of scrimmage.
Offense	The team with possession of the ball.
Defense	The team opposing the offense to prevent it from advancing the ball.
Passer	The offensive player that throws the ball and may or may not be the quarterback.
Rusher	The defensive player assigned to rush the quarterback to prevent him/ her from passing the ball by pulling his/her flags or by blocking the pass.
Live Ball	Refers to the period of time that the play is in action. Generally used in regard to penalties. Live ball penalties are considered part of the play and must be enforced before the down is considered complete.
Dead Ball	Refers to the period of time immediately before or after a play.
Whistle	Sound made by an official using a whistle that signifies the end of the play or a stop in the action for a timeout, halftime or the end of the game.
Inadvertent Whistle	Official's whistle that is performed in error.
Charging	An illegal movement of the ball-carrier directly at a defensive player who has established position on the field. This includes lowering the head or initiating contact with a shoulder, forearm or the chest.
Flag Guarding	An illegal 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, arm or ball.
Lateral	A backward or sideway toss of the ball by the ball-carrier.
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	A rude, confrontational or offensive behavior or language.