



Football Rules

All Play Baltimore Co-ed Flag Football games take place at the Owings Mills Sports Complex
Thanks to SOBO Sports for their help with the rules!

TEAMS AND ROSTERS

- Team Rosters must be comprised of at least 10 Players (no Maximum).
- All players must be 21 and older by the start of the first game.
- ALL Players must sign the current season's Official Waiver to be an eligible Player.
- Player's can only play on ONE (1) team.
- Each team will field a maximum of 7 Players during play.
- If a team cannot field 7 Players, they can still play with a minimum of 4 Players.
- A maximum of 5 men per team is allowed during play, with no minimum requirement of men.
- A minimum of 1 woman per team is required during play.

Equipment:

- All players MUST be wearing their PLAY BALTIMORE FOOTBALL team shirt.
- Shirts must be tucked in, to allow for similar access to flags
- No jewelry of any kind (except medic alert items) may be worn on the field. This includes watches, necklaces, earrings, nose rings, eye rings, bracelets, anklets, etc.
- Cleats of any kind are not allowed in the facility; however players may wear turf shoes.
- If both teams are wearing the same colors, the home team will wear pennies

FORFEITS

1. Game time is forfeit time.
2. Any team that can not fulfill the required number of Players (see TEAMS AND ROSTERS) by the scheduled game time will forfeit the game, unless both Captains agree on a delayed start time/shortened game. The game clock will always start at the scheduled game time.
3. If a team asks another team for permission to add a player because they are short and that request is approved, then the outcome of the game will stand as played. No more than two players (maximum one male and one female) will be accepted as substitutes for a game to be played without automatic forfeit. This means if your team is short more than two players or more than one of either gender from the absolute minimum requirements, you are automatically forfeited.

Rules:

Starting the Game

- The team that wins the coin flip at the start must choose one of two options:
 - 1) which team will start with the ball
 - 2) which goal his/her team will defend.
- The team that receives the ball 1st will start their offensive series at their own 5 yard line (same spot as the 1 point conversion - single line).
- At the start of the 2nd half, the teams will switch sides and the team who was on defense to start the game will now start on offense.

GENDER RULES

- Teams **MUST** use a female player as an Operative Player within 4 consecutive plays, or a penalty will be assessed.
- The cycle using a female player within 4 consecutive plays **DOES NOT** stop after a TD.
- If a team runs 3 male plays in a row and scores a TD on the 3rd male play, a female **MUST** be used as an Operative Player for the PAT.
- When punting, teams do **NOT** have to use a female as an Operative Player on a "forced gender play".
- On a forced gender play, the defense must stay in man-to-man coverage, with no "man in motion" until any offensive player, other than the QB, touches the ball.
- The Gender count resets after each change of possession.

An Operative Player is defined as a player who:

- is the intended receiver
- runs the ball as the primary runner (must cross the line of scrimmage or be deflagged before the line of scrimmage.)
- receives the snap as the QB and must attempt to be the person who initiates the ball crossing the line of scrimmage – unless she is sacked
- Receives a handoff from the QB and attempts a forward pass.

An Operative Player is NOT defined as a player who:

- hands off the football
- snaps the ball into play
- receives a hand-off only to give it back to a male before crossing the line of scrimmage
- lines up as QB and takes a knee

Game Play

1. The game clock will run for 20 minutes in the 1st and 2nd halves. Games are approx. 1 hour.
2. The game clock will run continuously for 20 minutes in the 1st half, with only time outs, injuries, and PATs within 2 minutes of the half stopping the clock. Halftime break time will vary.
3. If a time-out is called immediately following a touchdown, the clock **WILL NOT** run during the PAT, and will not start again until the hike of the ball to start the next offensive drive.
4. The game clock will run continuously for 18 minutes until the 2 minute warning in the 2nd half, with only time outs and/or injuries stopping the clock.
5. Once the game clock reaches the 2 minute warning, the clock will stop for the following: **incomplete passes, ball carrier or ball goes out of bounds, either team scores, change of possession, penalties, injuries, Referee and Team time-outs (see below).**
6. If the game clock expires on a scoring play (TD or Safety), the offense may attempt the PAT if necessary.
7. If the game clock expires on a play in which the defense commits a penalty, the offense may choose to run an additional play, if the penalty is accepted.
8. If the offense scores a TD on the additional play, they may also attempt a PAT.
9. If either team is ahead by 17 points or more, the clock will not stop during the last 2 minutes of the 2nd half, except for injuries and time outs.
10. When the clock is running, the offensive team has 25 seconds to snap the ball once the Referee has spotted the ball.
11. Both teams will have (2) 1 minute time-outs per game.
12. If the offense intentionally causes a penalty to stop the clock after having used both their time outs, there will be a ten (10) second run off of the clock.

PLAYING DEFENSE

1. Teams may play man-to-man or zone defense.
2. If a player is missing one or both of his/her flags and receives the ball, the offensive player is ruled down at the point of reception.

3. During forced gender plays, when the male is QB, the females may play any type of defense they wish. This includes double covering, zone, and prevent type defenses. Males **MUST** play man-to-man on forced gender plays when a male is QB. There is no "man in motion" allowed on a forced gender play with man to man coverage.
 4. If the offense has fewer players on the field than the defense, the defense may only double or triple cover the QB on a forced gender play. **No other player may be double or triple covered on a forced gender play.**
 5. If the ball comes within the 5 yard coverage zone of the player you are covering (during a gender play) you may legally make a play on the ball, as long as you do not leave the 5 yard coverage zone (of the offensive player you are covering).
 6. Men may not cover women or play back in the defensive zone on a forced gender play, unless the offense has more female players (only when the offense has more than 2 females) than the defense. In this case, **ALL** the females on the defense **MUST** play against the females and any amount of extra females on the offense is how many males may play in the zone coverage against them.
 7. On a forced gender play where a female is QB, any type of defense is allowable.
- The Defensive Rush:**
8. The Line Judge is responsible for shouting out the rush count after the ball has hiked.
 9. All Line Judges will estimate a 5 second count in the following manner:
"1 – ONE THOUSAND, 2 – ONE THOUSAND, 3 - ONE THOUSAND, 4 - ONE THOUSAND, 5 – ONE THOUSAND, GO!"
 10. The defense may not cross the line of scrimmage until the Line Judge finishes his rush count and says "GO".
 11. The defense may, however, cross the line of scrimmage **BEFORE** the Line Judge finishes his rush count, once the ball leaves the QB's hand(s).

BLOCKING AND CONTACT

1. **BLOCKING** is not allowed.
2. **AGGRESSIVE CONTACT** is not allowed.
3. No physical contact in the attempt to block will be allowed at the line of scrimmage, in the backfield or downfield. We understand that some contact can not be avoided, but all players must try and avoid any contact with other players on the field of play.
4. Picks, intentionally or unintentionally, may be regarded as an illegal block and will be called as a penalty.
5. On punts, interceptions or on offense, the team in possession of the ball (other than the ball carrier) is encouraged to stand still, thus decreasing the chance of an illegal block.

Offensive Drive

1. When a team starts their offensive drive (start of game, after a turnover, after a score, etc.), they have (4) downs to **EARN** a 1st down by either advancing the ball across mid-field or by completing (2) passes beyond the line of scrimmage.
2. If the receiver catches the ball and keeps at least (1) foot in bounds, it will be ruled a reception.
3. If an offensive player steps out of bounds during a play, he/she is an ineligible player until an eligible player touches the ball.
4. If an offensive player is forced out of bounds by a defender, he/she is eligible player as soon as they come back in bounds.
5. If a defender causes the receiver to go out of bounds (in the eyes of the Officials), prior to the receiver landing in bounds after a catch, the receiver will be credited with a reception where he/she went out of bounds. This includes a play in the end zone, in which the Official will rule the play a Touchdown.
6. The QB may **NOT** snap the ball to him/herself. If this happens, play will stop immediately and it will result in a 5-yd penalty and repeat the down. The snap may be an underhand toss, overhand throw, or a handoff. The person snapping the ball may not move their feet to make the snap.

GETTING A First Down

1. **TEAMS CAN EARN ONE (1) 1ST DOWN PER OFFENSIVE DRIVE** (not including automatic 1st down penalties).
2. First Down is automatically earned by crossing midfield.
3. Mid-Field 1st Down = Team advances the ball across the mid-field line within 4 downs (one foot must also cross the line).

4. Teams may only get a first down by crossing midfield ONCE per offensive drive.
5. If the Defense commits a penalty in which the spot of the ball (after the penalty is assessed) would advance the ball across the Mid-Field line, the offense has the option to:
 - a. Receive the full penalty yardage, resulting in a Mid-Field 1st down for the Offense.
 - b. Receive "half the distance to Mid-Field" penalty yardage, and an automatic 1st down.
6. The QB CAN run the ball on the offense's side of the field at any time, prior to advancing the ball across mid-field. Once the offense starts a new play on the defense's side of the field (past the mid-field line),
7. The QB CAN NOT run the ball until a defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage in an attempt to rush the QB after the mid-field line.
8. The offense CAN use a player (other than the QB) to run the ball at any time on either side of the field. Ex: Hand-off, pitch, lateral, pass completed behind the line of scrimmage.

Continuance of Play

Play will continue until the:

1. Ball carrier loses a flag. It does not matter if the flag falls off accidentally, or is ripped off by a defender.
2. Ball carrier only has one flag. If the ball carrier receives the ball and only has one flag, he or she is ruled down at the spot of possession.
3. Ball carrier leaves the field of play.
4. Ball carrier scores a TD or PAT.
5. Ball carrier's body, knee or elbow touches the ground (hands or feet not included).
6. Ball carrier's body, knee or elbow touches the side walls (which is considered part of the ground).
7. Defense scores a Safety, TD or Intercepted PAT run back for 2 points.
8. Ball touches the ground as a result of a fumble, incomplete pass, or punt.
9. Referee blows the whistle (including an inadvertent whistle). On an inadvertent whistle after a reception or on a running play, the ball will be spotted where the ball carrier was when the whistle was blown. On an inadvertent whistle after the ball is snapped and before the QB releases the ball, the ball will be spotted at the original line of scrimmage and the down will be replayed.

LINE OF SCRIMMAGE

1. The location of the ball, where the ball carrier's flag is removed, will be spotted for the next play.
2. The offense must have at least (3) players at the line of scrimmage before the ball is hiked.
3. All offensive players must be at least 5 yards from the sideline before the ball is hiked.
4. All offensive players must be set for at least (1) second before the ball is hiked, except for a man in motion.
5. Only (1) man in motion is allowed for each play. He/she may move forward or backward before the ball is hiked, but when it is hiked he/she can only be moving parallel with the line of scrimmage, or backward.

CHANGE OF POSSESSION

The offense can turn the ball over to the other team in the following manners:

1. After the offensive team attempts a PAT, the opposing team gets the ball on their own 5 yard line.
2. If the offense fails to score or earn a 1st down within 4 plays.
3. If the offense punts the ball to the other team on 4th down.
4. The defense intercepts a pass or lateral.
5. A fumble that touches the ground is a dead ball and is NOT a turnover.

PUNTING

1. The offense team can decide to punt on 4th down, but must declare it to the Ref. and the opposing team.
2. If the offense declares a punt, they must kick it.
3. There will be no fake punt plays allowed.
4. The offensive team does not have to hike the ball to the punter.
5. The punter must kick the ball to the opposing team.
6. The punter can stand anywhere behind the line of scrimmage, and may not cross it, when kicking the ball.
7. All offensive players must stay behind the line of scrimmage until the ball is punted.
8. The offense cannot recover their own punt.

9. If the offense touches the ball before the receiving team, it is a dead ball and spotted where it was touched.
10. Once a punted ball touches the ground or a side wall, it is a dead ball.
11. The receiving team can advance a punted ball as long as it does not touch the ground.
12. If a punted ball is received in the end zone, the ball carrier can either take a knee or advance the ball. If he/she takes a knee, his team will receive the ball at the 5 yard line.
13. Teams do NOT have to use an Operative Female Player when punting on "forced gender".
14. If the punt hits the ceiling, it is still a live ball.
15. If a punt goes beyond the end zone, it is considered a touchback.

SCORING

The ball must cross the goal line plane and the ball carrier must have at least (1) foot in the end- zone.

1. Touchdowns – 6 points
2. PAT (5 yards) – 1 point
 - For a one point PAT attempt, the ball is not live and if intercepted the ball is dead and the PAT no good.
3. PAT (10 yards) – 2 points
4. For a one point PAT attempt, the ball is not live and if intercepted cannot be run back
 - For a two point PAT attempt, the ball **is** live and if intercepted can be run back, for either the starting point of the defenses first down OR **for a touch down (6 points).**
5. Safeties – 2 points

Scoring a Safety:

 - When an offensive player is ruled "down" in their own end zone.
 - If the offense fumbles the ball in their own end zone.
 - If the offense hikes the ball out of their own end zone.
 - If the ball carrier runs out of bounds from their own end zone.

Penalties:

All penalties will be called by the referee.

All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage.

All disputed calls must be addressed by the team captain only. Violation of this rule can result in a Unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.

Offsides: 5 yards and automatic first down

Illegal Participation: 5 yards and replay of down (no more than 7 players on the field for either offense or defense, no more than 5 males on the field)

Unsportsmanlike conduct: Up to 15 yards, and game ejection, loss or replay of down as play warrants (at the discretion of the refs)

Defense:

Interference: 10 yards and replay of down from spot of foul (if in end zone, from 1 yard line)

Illegal contact: 5 yards and replay of down
(holding, blocking, etc.)

Illegal flag pull: 10 yards and replay of down
(before receiver has ball)

Illegal rushing: 5 yards and replay of down (before ref has yelled go)

Illegal Coverage during Gender Play: 5 yards and replay of down

Offense:

Illegal motion: 5 yards

(more than one person moving, false start)

Illegal forward pass: 5 yards and loss of down

(pass received behind line of scrimmage/QB throwing ball past LoS)

Intentional Grounding: 5 yards and loss of down

Not using an operative player: 5 yards and loss of down (running 4 consecutive plays w/out a female)

Flag guarding: 5 yards from spot of foul (from line of scrimmage, a player may not use his hands, arms or the ball to block a defender from removing his or her flag.)

Delay of game: 5 yards and loss of down (the offensive team must put the ball into play 30 seconds after referee has spotted the ball)

Offensive Pass Interference: 10 yards and loss of down

Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.

Only the team captain may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players cannot question judgment calls.

Complaints:

If anyone on your team has a complaint with a call, he/she must let the captain know. The captain is the only person on the team that is allowed to approach the referee with a complaint and may only be done in between games and not during a game. Additionally, there will be no negative talking to the opposing team. A violation of either of these rules is punishable by game/match/league suspension. The referees call is FINAL.

Playoffs

The top teams will go to playoffs. The top teams will be determined by record, then total number of points scored, and then head to head games won. If a tie persists, a coin flip will determine the winner.

STILL HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT FOOTBALL?
PLEASE EMAIL: INFO@PLAYBALTIMORE.COM