

# GYA NFL Flag Football Official Rulebook (2026 Season)

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## I. Game Flow & Structure

- **Start of Game:** Coin toss at midfield (Visitor calls). Winner chooses Offense or Defense; Loser chooses direction. Note: Deferrals are not permitted.
- **The Drive:** All possessions begin at the 5-yard line.
- **To Midfield:** 4 downs to cross the 25-yard line (midfield).
- **To Score:** 3 downs to score once midfield is crossed.
- **4th Down Decision (Before Midfield):**
  - **Punt:** Ball is moved to the opponent's 5-yard line.
  - **Play:** If the attempt fails, the opponent takes over at the dead-ball spot.
- **Change of Possession:** If an offense fails to score, the new offense starts at their own 5-yard line (except on failed 4th down attempts).

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## II. Kickoffs & Onside Plays

| Division  | Kickoff Style             | Onside Play (Trailing Team, 2nd Half) |
|-----------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 6U & 8U   | None (Start at 5-yd line) | One play to gain <b>5 yards</b>       |
| 10U       | Throw or Punt             | One play to gain <b>5 yards</b>       |
| 12U & 14U | Throw or Punt             | One play to gain <b>10 yards</b>      |

- **Kickoff Out of Bounds:** Receiving team takes ball + 5 yards from the exit spot **OR** requests a re-kick (Max 3 attempts).
- **Touchback:** If the ball is downed in or travels through the end zone, play starts at the **5-yard line**.
- **Onside Result:** Success = possession at the spot. Failure = turnover at the spot.

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### III. Field & Layout

- Field options:
  - 25 yards x 70 yards with 10-yard end zones
  - 25 yards x 64 yards with 7-yard end zones
- Midfield serves as the line to gain for a first down.
- Stepping on a boundary line is out of bounds.

### IV. Timing

- 48-minute running clock (2 x 24-minute halves)
- 25-second play clock
- 2 timeout per half (60 seconds)

#### Mercy Rule

- Regular Season: 35-point lead

### V. Scoring & Overtime

- **Touchdown:** 6 Points
- **PAT (5-yard line):** 1 Point (Pass Only)
- **PAT (10-yard line):** 2 Points (Run or Pass)
- **Safety:** 2 Points
- **Interception Return:** 6 Points (Regulation) / 2 Points (on PAT or Overtime)

#### Overtime Format

- **OT 1:** 1 play from 5-yd (1pt) or 10-yd (2pt).
- **OT 2:** Mandatory 2-point attempt from 10-yd line.
- **OT 3:** 1 play from 5-yd line going *out*; the team with the most yards gained wins.
- **Rules:** No timeouts. Any interception returned for a TD ends the game.

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## VI. Running & Passing

- The quarterback may not run past the line of scrimmage.
- The ball must be snapped between the legs to start the play 10u and up. The ball can be snapped off to the side for 6u and 8u.
- Handoffs, pitches, and laterals are permitted behind the line of scrimmage only.
- No center sneaks, blocking or screening allowed.
- Runners are not permitted to jump, leap or hurdle, in the officials' judgement while advancing the ball. Play blown dead from incident.
- No running in No-Run Zones.
- A 7-second pass clock applies unless a handoff, pitch, or lateral occurs.
- Only one forward pass per play.

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## VII. Division-Specific Mechanics

### A. Rushing the Passer

- **6U & 8U:** No rushing. Defenders must remain behind the Line of Scrimmage (LOS).
- **10U+:** Up to 2 declared rushers (must raise hand). Must start 7 yards from the LOS.

### B. Snapping & Passing

- **Snaps:** 6U/8U may side-snap. 10U+ must snap between the legs.
- **Pass Clock:** 7 seconds to throw. Reset only if a handoff or pitch occurs.
- **QB Run:** The QB cannot run the ball past the LOS unless the ball has been handed off first.

### C. On-Field Coaching

- **6U, 8U, 10U Girls:** One coach on field (allowed pre and post-snap).
  - **10U Boys:** One coach on field pre-snap only; must be off before the snap.
  - **12U+:** Sideline coaching only.
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## VIII. Flag Pulling

- No tackling, holding, or stripping the ball.
- Flag falls off: Ball is dead where the flag lands.
- Player with 0 or 1 flag catching the ball: Play is dead immediately.
- Flag guarding is illegal.

## IX. Sportsmanship & Conduct

- No intentional contact, tackling, or cheap shots.
  - Profanity or abusive language is prohibited.
  - Two unsportsmanlike penalties on a player or coach result in ejection.
  - Coaches are responsible for players and fans.
  - Fans must remain at least 10 yards off the field and between end zones only.
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## X. Field Rules & Penalties

**No-Run Zones (All divisions):** Located 5 yards before midfield and 5 yards before the goal line. In these zones, the offensive play **must** be a pass.

### Penalty Quick-Reference

| Penalty Type | Yards   | Result        | Examples                                       |
|--------------|---------|---------------|--|
| Defensive    | 5 or 10 | Auto 1st Down | Offside, Holding, Roughing, Unsportsmanlike    |
| Offensive    | 5 or 10 | Loss of Down  | False Start, OPI, Flag Guarding, Delay of Game |
| Spot Foul    | Spot    | Auto 1st Down | Defensive Pass Interference                    |

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## XI. Equipment Checklist

- **Mouth Guards:** Mandatory for all players at all times.
- **Flags:** Official NFL FLAG belts (Must contrast with short color).
- **Football:** Game balls should be age specific. 6u-8u boys/girls, 10u girls peewee; 10u boys, 12u boys/girls, 14u boys/girls junior
- **Jerseys:** Must be tucked into shorts/pants.
- **Footwear:** Cleats allowed (No metal spikes).
- **Restrictions:** No jewelry or hats allowed during play. Headbands, softshell helmets, sunglasses or beanies allowed.

