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# Advantage Flag Football League

## MISSION STATEMENT

**"To provide the most well organized, entertaining & educational sports programs for our community participants, coaches, parents and youth."**

**Advantage Flag Football** is a 6 v 6 flag football game, filled with fun and action. Flag football is different from tackle football. In flag football, the teams thrive by use of speed, quickness, deception and agility to defeat their opponent. In this game, the offensive team plays for a first down at midfield and then a touchdown. Running and passing plays are allowed, although there are "no running zones" 5 yards before midfield and 5 yards before each goal line. The defensive team covers receivers, rushes the passer and grabs flags to make "tackles". It is intended to be a "non-contact" sport.

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## Rules and Regulations (6v6)

### THE BASICS

- The winner of the coin toss chooses first possession or direction of play
- All possessions start on the 5 yard line – 1<sup>st</sup> down and midfield to gain
- **Snapping the Ball:**
  - In the co-ed division, the ball must be snapped between the legs.
  - In the all-girls division, the ball must be snapped from the ground but does **not** have to be snapped between the legs. The ball may be snapped to any player whose feet are at least 2 yards behind the line of scrimmage. The player receiving the snap is considered the quarterback for that play.
- 3 plays to cross midfield, 3 plays to score!!
  - 3 plays to cross midfield for a 1<sup>st</sup> down. Failing to do so will result in a turnover on downs. Crossing it will give you an additional 3 plays to score a touchdown
- Interceptions can be returned for a score (6, 2 or 1 point(s))
- Teams switch directions in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half
- There are No Kickoffs
- No Blocking/Impeding
  - Player can not intentionally cutoff, reroute or impede the progress of a defender and his clear path to the flags

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- Contact is not necessary for a foul
- Player can trail runner but not lead/impede defenders
- Fumbles are dead - The ball is spotted where it hits the ground.
  - \*\* Exception: Forward fumble – Brought back to where the ball was lost

## PLAYERS/GAMES

- Co-ed Division:
  - Teams consist of 8 players - 6 on the field with 2 substitutes
    - Teams must always field a minimum of 5 players
    - If teams must forfeit, it will result in a 21-0 loss
  - Player participation - If all 8 players show up and can play:
    - All players will play 3 out of the 4 quarters
    - All players will sit out 1 full quarter
    - Substitutions are only allowed in between quarters \*\* Exception: Injury (see player advantage)
- All-Girls Division
  - Teams may consist of **up to 10 players** – 6 on the field at a time.
  - Teams must always field a **minimum of 5 players.**
  - If a team must forfeit, it will result in a **21-0 loss.**
  - **Player Participation & Substitutions:**
    - **No mandatory sit-out requirement** – coaches have flexibility in playing time.
    - **“Free” substitutions are allowed on every play**, meaning players can be rotated in and out without restrictions.

## ATTIRE

- Cleats are allowed, except for metal spikes. Inspections must be made
- All players must wear a protective mouthpiece; there are no exceptions!!
- Official Advantage Flag League jerseys and shorts must be worn
- Baseball style ball caps are not allowed
- Only 2 types of beanies allowed
  - Team name OR AFL Logo
- Players with casts must provide a doctor's note and wear sufficient padding, subject to AFL Staff approval
  - “Safe” will be determined on game night by AFL Staff
- Hats with bills are not allowed

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- If AFL game shorts are not available, substitution players must have all black shorts. No pockets - No logos - No stripes
  - Earrings must be removed or have medical tape covering (see AFL tent as needed)

## COACHES ON THE FIELD

- Only two coaches allowed on the sideline per team
- During a dead ball, coaches in certain divisions are allowed on the field (see below for details):
  - Coaches are allowed on the field during a dead ball to call plays and instruct players but must exit before play begins.
  - Teams can huddle on the sideline and break from there
  - Players in the game must remain on the field
- **Coaches are not allowed on the field during a live ball – All Divisions**
- Coaches must be completely out of the way and make sure they don't interfere with the play. Coaches **MUST** be at least 10 yards from the closest player at the snap
- Different divisions have different rules for the coaches on field during a "Dead Ball"
  - 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> grade division - 2 Coaches
  - 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> grade division - 1 Coach
  - 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grade divisions - No coaches allowed
  - 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade divisions - No coaches allowed
  - All Girls division – No coaches allowed

## PLAYER ADVANTAGE RULE

- 1 Player Advantage: Opposing coach gets to pick a player that **can not** throw a forward pass the entire 2<sup>nd</sup> half
- 2 Player Advantage Opposing coach gets to pick 2 players that **can not** throw a forward pass the entire 2<sup>nd</sup> half
- In the case of "injury" during game, opposing coach picks player to serve as sub
- See "Screen pass" and "Forward Pass" in definitions

## TIMING REGULATIONS

- Games are played with four 10 minute running quarters
  - 1 minute water break between quarters and approximately 2 minute half
- THE CLOCK DOES NOT STOP UNLESS A TIMEOUT IS CALLED (Example: Injury)
- 30 second play clock – From whistle to snap
  - After the official spots the ball he will blow the play clock whistle

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- When the whistle sounds, the ball is ready for play
  - See "Delay of Game"
  - 1 timeout per half and no carry overs
  - If the game is tied at the end of regulation, **ONE OVERTIME** period played in regular season (See below for overtime period details; No overtime in 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> grade Division)
  - **Overtime periods unlimited until winner determined only in Playoffs**

## OVERTIME (1/2<sup>nd</sup>-NO OVERTIME)

- The team winning the coin flip may choose to start on offense or defense.
- Players for overtime - coaches choice – ANY 6 – No substitutions during overtime
- No Timeouts
- Ball is placed 12 yards away from Opponents End Zone.
- All possessions are played on the same end of the field for overtime period. (teams just flip from Offense to Defense – not move from one end of field to the other)
- Each team gets 1 series (2 plays) in OT to score a TD and then a PAT attempt
  - If a team scores or the ball is intercepted on the first play of a series, they don't get the 2<sup>nd</sup> play, series over
- Playoff games will repeat Overtime until winner is determined
- Regular season games can end in a tie
- Fouls on the defense will give the offense another series to score
- Interceptions end the possession but can be returned for a score
  - 6, 2 or 1 point(s) will be awarded for the return if they reach the end zone

## SCORING

- Touchdown - 6 Points

## P A T

- 1 point - 5 yard line
- 2 points - 12 yard line

## INTERCEPTIONS RETURNED FOR SCORE

- Interceptions can be returned for a score on any play during the game
- 6, 2 or 1 point(s) will be awarded to the scoring team.

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- The number of points the offense was attempting to score will be awarded to the scoring team

*\*\* Note: If a runner is fouled on the interception return by someone other than the last man, that foul will carry over to start the new series. (Pushing – Holding – Tackling – Tripping)*

- Interceptions are live - Can be returned for a score all game long  
An intercepted pass by the defense may be returned, and forward progress on the return will be rewarded to the defense. The next series of downs will start at the point where the defender's flag was pulled after the interception. Example: Prior to mid-field will give them 3 downs to cross mid-field for a 1st down. Past mid-field will give them 3 downs to score.

## RUNNING

- The QB is prohibited from directly running with the ball.
  - "QB" is the player that took the snap from center
- Handoffs, laterals and pitches are legal (except in 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade – No Run Plays)
- It is the runner's responsibility to avoid contact with the defender. (See "Charging" in offensive penalty section below)
- The player who takes a handoff, lateral or pitch can throw a forward pass from behind the LOS (line of scrimmage)
- Once the ball has been handed off, lateraled or pitched, all defensive players are eligible to rush (On the release from QB)
- No Center Sneaks – The center can not take a handoff from the QB
- Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to advance the ball or avoid a defensive player (no diving).
- The ball is spotted where the runners feet are when the flag is pulled
  - Not the ball
  - The runners back foot is the key

*\*\* Example: If the player's feet are straddling the goal line when his flags are pulled he would be downed short of the goal line*

## NO RUN ZONES (Note: 7th/8th grade – No Run Plays)

- No-Running zones are 5 yards from each goal line and 5 yards from midfield, on both sides.
- "No Run Zones" only apply when headed into them, not away from them
- These are designed to avoid short yardage, power-running situations
- Once you cross midfield the next "No run zone" is at the 5 yard line
- When in the "No Run Zone", the ball must cross the LOS in the air to be a legal pass play

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## RECEIVING

- All players are eligible
- Only one player is allowed in motion at the snap
- A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception

## PASSING

- QB – The player that takes the snap from center
- Forward pass – A pass that goes beyond the LOS in the air
  - See “Screen pass” and “Forward pass” in definitions
- The “QB” has seven seconds to throw the ball
  - Once the ball is handed off, pitched or lateraled the 7 second clock turns off (except 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade, only 7 seconds to throw, no running plays)
- Interceptions are live - Can be returned for a score all game long
- Interceptions are live - Can be returned for a score all game long
  - An intercepted pass by the defense may be returned, and forward progress on the return will be rewarded to the defense. The next series of downs will start at the point where the defenders flag was pulled after the interception. Example: Prior to mid-field will give them 3 downs to cross mid-field for a 1st down. Past mid-field will give them 3 downs to score.
- Exception to the forward progress spot. No ball shall be spotted closer to or from the goal-Line than the 5 yard-line. Example: If the players flag is pulled at the opponents 2 yard-line, the succeeding spot will be the 5 yard-line. An interception that is downed inside the defenses own 5 yard-line will be move out to the 5 yard-line to start their series of downs.

## DEAD BALLS

### Play is ruled "dead" if:

- A player is blocking
- A player is flag guarding
- The runners flag is pulled
- The runners steps out of bounds
- Touchdown or safety is scored
- Any part of the runners body hits the ground except for his palm and/or the bottom of his foot
- Ball hits the ground
- If a Flag is “missing” the runner is downed when he is touched anywhere on the body

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## COACHES RESPONSIBILITY

- Jerseys must be tucked inside the shorts before the snap
- Flags must be always worn on the hips (flags must not be reversed to face inwards)

## RUSHING THE PASSER

- Any number of players can rush the passer as long as they are **behind** the 10 yard marker at the snap, not next to it
- The free rush line will be marked or designated by the referee 10 yards from the line of scrimmage. Any defender lined up at or beyond the 10 yard mark, may rush the passer at the snap
- Players rushing the passer can raise their hands/arms but cannot make contact with the passer
- If a defender jumps across the marker before the snap, he can always go back behind the marker and rush legally
- If you chose to jump and try to block a pass, be aware that you cannot land on the passer or crash into him
  - When there is contact with the quarterback the officials are told to error on the side of safety. If they must think about it, it's a foul.

## AFL Terminology and Definitions

- **QB** – Player that takes snap from center
- **Passer** - Player attempting to throw the ball
- **LOS** – Line of Scrimmage
- **Forward pass** – In Advantage Flag Football, a “forward pass” is defined as one that goes beyond the LOS in the air
- **Screen Pass** – A pass that is caught behind the LOS
- **Last man** – The only man with a chance to pull the runners flags before he scores
- **Runner** – The Player in possession of the ball
- **Blocking/Impeding** – A player can not intentionally cutoff, reroute or impede the progress of a defender and the clear path to his flags. Contact is not necessary for a foul.

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- **Live Ball** – “Snap to whistle”
  - **Dead ball** – “Whistle to snap”
  - **DPI** – Defensive pass interference
  - **OPI** – Offensive pass interference
  - **Series of downs in overtime** – 2 plays
  - **Fouls on scoring plays** – Carry Them over

## **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED**

### **SPORTSMANSHIP**

- Trash talking is illegal. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. (Trash talk is talk that is offensive to officials, opposing players, teams or spectators.) If trash talking occurs, the referee may give one warning and if it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game. Warnings are not required, and Officials have the right to determine offensive language. The team may be penalized for USLC.
- Foul language is unacceptable
- When players pull a flag, what do they do with it?
  - Do they hand it back to the runner?
  - Do they slam it down on the ground?
  - Do they throw it the opposite direction, so the runner has to go chase it down??
- This will be monitored, and the officials will control the game - If the field monitor or referee witnesses any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game

### **PENALTIES - SUMMARY**

- Referees determine whether contact is legal or illegal
- Incidental contact is contact that does not materially affect the play and is deemed by the referee to be unintentional or insignificant.
  - Contact that is not a foul
  - It's the sole discretion of the referee if the contact is incidental

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- Only the team captain and head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations
  - Players cannot question judgment calls.
  - Games cannot end on an accepted defensive penalty

## PENALTIES

### DEFENSE: All defensive penalties carry an automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down

- Offsides: 5 yards - Previous spot
  - Defender in the neutral zone before the snap
- Incidental Contact: Contact that is not a foul
  - 2 types of contact: Legal and Illegal

*Example: The DB is attempting to knock down a pass and he slaps the WR arm just after the WR touches the ball, which in turn causes an incomplete pass*  
*That contact to his arm is legal since he was playing the ball and the ball beat the slap to his arm*
- Illegal Contact: 5 yards - Previous spot
  - Bump n run/illegal chuck
- Holding: 5 yards – End of the run
- Illegal Flag Pull: 5 yards – End of the run
  - Pulled intentionally before the player catches ball
  - If the flag is missing, he must be touched to be downed
- Illegal Rushing: 5 yards – Previous spot
  - Starting rush from inside -yard marker
- Pass Interference: 10 yards - Previous spot
  - Ball does not have to be catchable
- Coach Interference: 10 yards – Previous Spot
- Pushing: 10 yards – End of the run
  - Defender pushes player with no attempt at the flags

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- Roughing the Passer –10 yards - Previous spot
    - Excessive contact with the passer
    - Even if you are going for the flags the contact must be minimal
  - Last Man Rule: Award a score
    - If in the Referees sole discretion, a player is on a direct path to the end zone, with only one opponent between him and the goal line and he is fouled which prevents him from scoring, that team will be awarded a score.(Tackling, holding, tripping, pushing etc.)  
6, 2 or 1 points will be awarded. Depending on what the team was attempting to score when the foul occurred  
*\*\* Note: If a foul occurs after the interception by someone other than the last man, the foul will carry over to start the new series (**Pushing – Holding – Tackling – Tripping**)*

## **OFFENSE: All offensive penalties carry a loss of down**

- Illegal Motion: 5 yards - Previous spot
  - More than one player in motion at the snap
- False start: 5 yards - Previous spot
  - Offensive player jumps before the ball is snapped
- Running Play in the “No Run Zone”: 5 yards – Previous spot
- Delay of Game: 5 yards – Previous spot
  - 30 second play clock  
*\*\* Note: 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Grade Divisions will be given a few warnings but we need to speed it up as a whole. 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> Grade Divisions will have a firm 30 sec*
  - Officials will be instructed to verbally call out the play clock periodically so it’s not a surprise when delay of game is called
- Illegal Forward Pass: 5 yards - Previous spot
  - Pass thrown beyond the LOS
- 7 Second sack: 5 yards - Previous spot
  - If QB does not handoff, pitch, lateral or throw a pass within 7 Seconds, it’s a 7 second sack (exception 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade – no running plays, firm 7 second clock only)
- QB Direct Run: 5 yards - Previous spot

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- All run plays must include handoff, pitch or lateral to another player
  - Player can trail runner but not lead
  - Blocking/Impeding: 10 yards – Spot foul
    - Player can not intentionally cutoff, reroute or impede the progress of a defender and the clear path to his flags
    - Contact is not necessary for a foul
  - Pass Interference – 10 yards – Previous Spot
    - No Illegal pick plays
    - No pushing off the defender
  - Coach Interference – 10 yard – Previous Spot
  - Flag Guarding: 10 yards - Spot foul
    - Runner may not use hands, elbows, etc to block or guard their flags if a defender is within arms' reach
    - The runner can guard his flags all he wants if there is no one around
    - It doesn't matter if the ball carrier is running in his natural running style or not, if he flag guards it's a foul

*Exception: 1/2<sup>nd</sup> Division: Play is dead at the spot of foul – No yards attached*
  - Charging: 10 yards – Spot foul
    - Running through or into players. It is the runner's responsibility to avoid contact with the defender. Pick a side. Go around
  - Jumping/Hurdling while carrying the ball: 10 yards – Spot foul
    - It will be the judgment of the Referee if the runner jumped or hurdled
  - USLC – Unsportsmanlike Conduct: 10 yards
    - Non-contact excessive unsportsmanlike act

*Examples: Throwing the flags – Trash talking – Excessive celebration*
  - Personal Foul – 10 yards
    - Excessive unsportsmanlike act (contact)
    - 2 Personal fouls in 1 game and that player will be ejected

*Examples: Late hit – Tackling – An extra hard push*

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