



## 2026 WCFL FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

**OFFICIAL'S AUTHORITY:** An official assumes authority 15 minutes prior to the scheduled game time and until they have left the field. The officials have the authority to rule on any situation not specifically covered in the rules. His/her discretion is final unless ruled otherwise by the supervisor on duty. The official has the right to eject players, parents, and coaches from the game or have a player sit out for part or all of the game. Fans, coaches, parents, and spectators are a part of the team and any fouls they commit will go against the team.

**CODE OF CONDUCT:** Every WCFL Board Member, coach, player, parent and guest is bound by the WCFL Code of Conduct that was signed in order for their child's participation in the league.

**For clarification, illegal equipment consists of:**

- A. Headgear containing any hard, unyielding, stiff material, including billed hats or items containing exposed knots.
- B. Jewelry
- C. Pads or braces worn above the waist and no casts of any kind
- D. Shoes with metal, ceramic, screw-in, or detachable cleats. Only EXCEPTION: Screw-in cleats are allowed if the screw is part of the cleat.
- E. Shirts or jerseys that DO NOT remain tucked in. Any hood on a coat, sweatshirt, or shirt that does not remain tucked in.
- F. Pants or shorts with any belt(s), belt loop(s), pockets(s), or exposed drawstring(s). Must wear WCFL issued game pants unless WCFL Board Member approves before the game.
- G. Leg and knee braces made of hard and/or unyielding material, unless covered on both sides and all edges overlapped. No exposed Metal.
- H. Any slippery or sticky foreign substance on equipment or exposed part of the body.
- I. Exposed metal on clothes or a person. This includes eyeglasses.
- J. Towels attached at the player's waist. If a player happens to be wearing a towel during a play and it is pulled, it is considered a pulled flag and the play is over.
- K. Eyeglasses must be clear and must be sports glasses with a prescription. No metal. No sunglasses or tint (unless medically necessary and pre-approved by the league).

**ON THE FIELD COACHING:** ONLY the Ultimate Division is allowed to have their coaches on the field for coaching.

- Coaches (one per team) shall be allowed in the huddle on both offense and defense for the entire game in Ultimate.
- On-field coaches should limit themselves to coaching their teams and refrain from engaging in any discussions concerning officiating. If an on-field coach receives an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty while on the field, he must go to the bench for the remainder of the game but can be replaced by another coach on the field.

**COACH – AST COACH - TEAM PARENT:** ONLY 3 non players (mix of coaches and team parent) are allowed inside the fence with the team (with the exception of a parent from the visiting team to hold the BOX). Coaches and team parents are required to complete background checks at the VOW.



**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:** Each team should start the game with 7 players: a minimum of 5 is needed to avoid a forfeit. A player can only play on one team.

**LENGTH OF GAME:** Playing time shall be 40 minutes, separated into two halves of 20 minutes and 5 minute halftime.

- There will be a running clock for the entire first half and the first 18 minutes of the second half
- The last 2 minutes of the second half will follow NIRSA timing rules (similar to NCAA Football)
- A coin toss will determine who shall receive the choice of possession or side at the beginning of the game.

**GAME CLOCK:**

- Stoppage will only take place for injuries, timeouts and water breaks.
- Normal operation with official stoppage required by rule shall commence in the last two minutes of the 2nd half.
- **TIMEOUTS:** ○ A Player or the Head Coach can call a timeout.
  - 2 Timeouts per half

**PLAY CLOCK-** 40 seconds from the completion of the previous play (45 seconds in Ultimate/Prep).

**OVERTIME PLAY:** During the regular season, each team will have one play of the ball from the 5 or 10-yard line.

- Winner of the coin toss shall elect between offense, defense or the end of the field. • If a team scores from the 5-yard line, the team will be awarded 1 Point
- If the team scores from the 10-yard line, it will be awarded 2 pts.
- If the 1<sup>st</sup> team scores then the 2<sup>nd</sup> team must go for 2 from the 10-yard line.

**Playoff Overtime Play - Each team will get a series of downs from the 10-yard line for Ultimate/Prep divisions and 20 yard line for the Varsity/Prep/ HS Prep Divisions and will alternate possessions until a winner is determined**

**MERCY RULE:** At the two-minute mark, if a team is ahead by 17 points or more when the Referee announces the two-minute warning for the second half, the game shall be over.

**SCORING**

- **Touchdown** – 6 points
- **Extra Point** - After scoring a touchdown, the offense can elect to go for 1, 2 or 3, however, once the ball is set, it can only be changed by using a timeout
  - 1 point – 5 yard line
  - 2 point – 10 yard line
  - 3 point – 20 yard line



**KICKING GAME: NO KICKS** - Teams will begin each half and after each score at the 30-yard line unless moved by a penalty.

- **Punting Rule:** A team may call for a punt and the ball will be moved 30 yards down the field from the line of scrimmage
- **Inside the 40:** If the ball is inside the opponent's 40 yard line, the "punt" shall be marked off half the distance to the goal.
- **Ultimate** punt equals 15 yards

#### **ONSIDE CONVERSION:**

- If a team is trailing and scores with 2 minutes or less remaining in the game and they are still trailing by 9 points or less they can elect an onside conversion attempt.
- The ball is placed on their own 20 YL and they are given 1 play (with the clock not running) to cross the 40 YL
- If the conversion is made, the play is whistled dead and they retain the ball starting on their own 30 YL and begin regular play
- If the play is not converted, the opposing team is given the ball on the opponents 30YL and regular play continues

**LINE OF SCRIMMAGE:** The offensive team **does not have a minimum number of players** to set the line of scrimmage at the snap.

- Once the center has placed his hands on the ball, no offensive or defensive player may enter the neutral zone before the snap
- The "defensive" line of scrimmage will be 5 yards off the ball designated by the official
- When the first down or defending End Zone is less than 5 yards, the defense must line up on the 1<sup>st</sup> down line or goal line to stop the offense.

#### **PUTTING THE BALL IN PLAY - (Snap Rules)**

- Snap can be between the legs or a side snap
- Snap must be one continuous motion from the ground to the QB (no lift and hand)
- Any player receiving the snap that is not stationary & directly behind the center (typical QB position) must be 2 yards off the line of scrimmage when they receive the snap, this includes a player in motion or a stationary player not directly behind the center.

**EXTENSION OF BALL:** When the runner's flag is pulled, the ball shall be spotted at the forward most point of the football (i.e., the runner can extend the ball forward).

**BACKWARD PASSES AND FUMBLES:** Any ball that is fumbled during a down will be dead by rule once it has touched the ground

- A backward pass or fumble may be caught or intercepted by any player inbounds and advanced.
- A player may not intentionally throw a backward pass out of bounds to conserve time or to avoid being downed; in such an event, the clock shall continue to run (if in the last two minutes of the game).
- Once a ball has touched the ground, the ball is considered dead



**FORWARD PASSES AND INTERCEPTIONS:** If a player is in the air attempting to catch a ball, the player must contact the ground with at least one-foot in-bounds with the ball in their possession prior to going out of bounds.

- If possession of the ball is lost simultaneously when they make contact with the ground, it is **not a catch**
- **Only one forward pass is permitted in WCFL flag football**

**PASS INTERFERENCE:** Any player contact that, in the view of the official, interferes with the attempt to catch a pass (offensive or defensive) is pass interference unless, in the view of the official, it occurs when two or more eligible receivers make a simultaneous and bona fide attempt to reach, catch, or bat a pass.

- It is also pass interference if an eligible receiver is de-flagged or touched prior to touching the ball on a pass thrown beyond the offensive line of scrimmage.

**FIRST DOWNS:** First downs are accomplished by crossing “zones”. They are designated by a white line and are spaced evenly across the playing field.

1. First down zones are marked 20 yards apart
2. If the offense is within 5 yards of a first down or the goal line, the defense will line up just behind the line. (This is referred to as a “Short Rush”)
3. Four downs to get a first down or score a touchdown when inside the 20-yard goal zone
4. **SCORING**
  - a. Touchdowns = 6 points
  - b. Extra Point = 1 point from 5-yard mark
  - c. Extra Points = 2 points from the 10-yard mark
  - d. Safety = 2 points

**SAFETY:** If a player carrying the ball across the goal line they are defending and the ball becomes dead, it is a Safety.

- If a team commits a foul in the end zone, they are defending, where the spot of the enforcement is designated as the spot of the foul, it is a safety.
- **A team recording a safety will receive 2 points and the ball shall be snapped by the scoring team at their own 30-yard line, unless moved by a penalty.**

**PERSONAL FOULS:** An act listed below or any other act of unnecessary roughness is a personal foul, Players shall not:

- Punch, strike, strip, steal or attempt to steal the ball from a player in possession.
- Trip an opponent.
- Throw the runner to the ground.
- Hurdle another player.
- Contact an opponent either before or after the ball is declared dead • Make any contact with an opponent that is deemed unnecessary
- Drive or run into a defensive player.
- Intentionally dive to gain yardage.
- Clip an opponent.



- Position themselves on the shoulders of a teammate or opponent to gain an advantage.
- Tackle the runner (Warrants ejection)

A player may be disqualified from further participation in any contest if, in the opinion of the official(s), such player shall commit any personal foul or multiple personal fouls with excessive force.

- In lieu of player disqualification for personal foul(s) and/or unsportsmanlike conduct, any official may place a player in a “Cool Down Period”, which shall require the player to be removed from the contest for a period of no less than five (5) minutes (as determined by the Game Clock).

**IMPEDING THE RUSHER/SCREENING** - The offensive player cannot impede a rusher in any way.

Rushers have the right to a clear path to the quarterback (even as the quarterback may move) regardless of where they lineup prior to the snap. If the path or line is occupied by a moving offensive player then it is the offensive player’s responsibility to avoid the rusher. Any disruption of the rusher’s path or contact with the rusher will result in an “impeding the rusher/Screening” penalty.

The **only exception** is if the offensive player **does not move** after the snap of the ball. Then it is the “Rushers” responsibility to go around the offensive player and to avoid contact.

**STIFF ARMING:** Stiff arming is not allowed: a personal foul will be called, and if warranted an unsportsmanlike conduct or ejection will result.

**OBSTRUCTING THE RUNNER:** A defensive player shall not hold, grasp, or obstruct the forward progress of the runner when attempting to remove the flag belt

**THE FLAG BELT:** All shirts must be tucked in, and are not permitted to hang over the flag-belt.

- **Flags worn must be the flags given by the WCFL**, no exceptions.
- Should a player lose their flag belt legally or illegally during a down and should that player gain possession of a live ball, that player will be considered down when a legal tag (one hand touched by the defense between the shoulders and knees including the hand and arm) is made
- **IF THE BELT HAS BEEN ILLEGALLY SECURED**, the score is disallowed, the player is ejected and a 10 yard Unsportsmanlike Conduct penalty will be administered from the succeeding spot.
- Players must have touched the ball before they can legally be deflagged.
- It is illegal for a defensive player to intentionally pull a flag from an offensive player who is not in possession of the ball. In cases where a flag belt is removed illegally, play should continue with the option of the penalty of the play (Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards)

**GUARDING THE FLAG BELT:** Runners shall not flag guard by using any part of the body or ball to deny the opportunity for an opponent to pull or remove the flag belt Flag guarding includes but is not limited to:

- Swinging the hand or arm over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from deflagging.
- Placing the ball in possession over the flag belt to present an opponent from deflagging.
- Lowering the shoulders in such a manner that flag guards.
- **Spinning and Jumping ARE: ALLOWED, so long as the offensive player does not create undue contact with the defense; in such event, it is a personal foul**

**NO HUDDLE RULE** - Teams can proceed to snap the ball without huddling.



**CLOCKING THE BALL** (snapping the ball and QB immediately throws ball onto the ground) – In the final two minutes of the game, the offensive team can “clock the ball” to stop the clock so long as the quarterback takes an immediate snap (whether under center or by shotgun) and throws an immediate forward pass into the ground.

**\*\*MUST PLAY RULE\*\***

All players are expected to play half of the game. For each half a player should be on Defensive or Offensive.

- They will play the entire half on that side of the ball unless injured, being disciplined or the child is emotionally unable to play
- To maintain compliance, every change of possession, your sideline is to be cleared with the change of players unless there is a player injured, being disciplined or emotionally unable to play.
- The Officials do not monitor this rule. If a coach suspects a violation of this rule by the opposing coach they are to summon a WCFL Board Member to the fields for evaluation.
- If a Coach is found to be in violation an automatic suspension will take place for the next game.
- If a player will be present but is not expected play or expected to only have limited play for any reason (injured, sick, consistently misses practice, being disciplined, etc.), the coach must first have discussed the situation with the parent and second made the division commissioner aware prior to the game

**GAME BALLS** - A Wilson GST or equivalent Football

- ULT, PREP & GIRLS JR – **Peewee/K2**
- VARSITY – **Junior/TDJ**
- PRO & GIRLS SR – **Youth/TDY**
- HS PREP - **Official**

**SIDELINES:** The player box will be 1 yard off the sidelines. The coaches' box is from the 20 to the 20

**No parent or fans are permitted INSIDE THE FENCE DURING A GAME. Access must be authorized with credentials.**

**No photographers are permitted inside the fence unless authorized by the WCFL**

**FIELDS 80 YARDS BY 40 YARDS**

**MOUTHPIECE:** All players must have a mouthpiece in place to participate.

**UNIFORMS:** Players are to wear only WCFL issued uniforms this includes game issued Flags. Uniform includes:

- WCFL issued jersey
- Shorts or pants with no pockets – (preferably black in color)
- Mouthpiece
- Approved Cleats



**In addition:**

- **Shorts/pants cannot have pockets, belt loops, or exposed strings. TAPE OVER POCKETS DOES NOT MAKE THE UNIFORM LEGAL.**
- Jerseys cannot cover the flags; they must be tucked in if too long
- No Towels, Hats, jewelry, or bands of any kind are to be worn.
- **PLAY BANDS ARE ALLOWED TO BE WORN (ON THE WRIST ONLY)**

**GAMEDAY REQUIREMENTS**

- Teams with the day's first game will help with Field Set up
- Last Game teams to help with Field Breakdown
- Home team to select a parent to run the scoreboard from the press box
- Visiting team responsible to get a parent to hold the BOX (down marker/stick)
- Please clean the bench area and the post-game meeting should be held away from the field and bench area