

GRACEAC FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

1) PLAYING TIME

- a) All players should receive equal playing time for both offense and defense in each game they participate to the extent practicable.
- b) If a coach is caught not evenly rotating players, disciplinary action may be taken.
- c) Teams are to consist of 10- to 15-players or as directed by GRACEAC.

2) GAME FORMAT

- a) The game is played with a maximum of seven (7) players. However, a minimum of six (6) players must be on the field at all times.
- b) Scoring
 - i) A touchdown 6 points.
 - ii) Extra points
 - (1) Following a touchdown, the offensive team is given an opportunity to score an extra point.
 - (a) 1 Extra Point is attempted five yards out from the goal line.
 - (b) 2 Extra Points is attempted 12 yards out from the goal line.
 - (c) An interception on an extra point will result in a failed attempt.
- c) Game Clock
 - i) The referee may stop the clock at their own discretion.
 - ii) Each team is allowed one 60-second timeout per half.
 - iii) Timeouts do not carry over into the next half.
 - iv) There will be 2 - 20 minute halves and a 5 minute halftime.
 - v) Game clock is a 'running clock', and only stops for the following:
 - (1) Allowed time-outs,
 - (2) Referee directed stops, and
 - (3) At the moment a referee signals a touch-down.
 - (a) Running clock re-starts the moment the ball is placed on the 40-yard line after extra point attempts.
 - vi) Coaches, players and spectators are to leave the field area immediately after the game to allow the next teams and coaches to assemble for warmups.

3) PLAYER ATTIRE

- a) The away team will wear the light side of the jersey and the home team will wear the dark side.
- b) To support MHSAA football guidelines, all coaches, players and spectators shall wear a mask at all time. This will remain into effect until further notice.
- c) Players are recommended to wear mouthpieces when in the game.
- d) Jerseys must be tucked in at all times. If a jersey is not tucked in, flag guarding may be called.

4) EQUIPMENT - FLAGS & BALLS

- a) The league will provide each team with its GRACEAC jerseys, flags, and footballs.
- b) At the end of the season, each team must return their footballs and flag belts to the league director.
- c) Junior size footballs are to be used in all practices and contests.

5) COACHES

- a) There will be one (1) head coach and up to two assistants on the field during games.
- b) Additional coaches during practice are encouraged, and must have completed all Diocesan and GRACEAC including Virtus Training and Concussion Training.
- c) Only one coach allowed on the field during the game and must remain out of play once huddle is broken.
- d) Coaches are responsible for understanding the rules, leading prayer and acting in accordance with the spirit of the flag football league and the Diocese *Standards of Ministerial Behavior*.
- e) Coaches shall direct or designate for all practice and contest prayer

6) PRACTICE

- a) Two practices per week starting with first Monday in September (before 1st game)
- b) One practice per week (after 1st game).



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7) POSSESSIONS

- a) Home team will be designated on the schedule.
- b) Home team shall choose the bench side.
- c) The away team shall have first possession.
- d) The team that begins on offense in the first half will begin on defense in the second half.
- e) For each possession the offense shall start at the 40-yard line toward the goal. Each team has 4 chances to move to the next 10-yard marker for a first down. If the ball is downed say at the 28-yard line, then the next first down marker will be the 20 yard line. If the ball is down on the 12-yard line the next first down marker will be the 10-yard line.
- f) Team will retain possession until they do not make a first down or score.
- g) A first down is only obtained by crossing the next 30 or 20 or goal line in 4 downs.
- h) There will be no kickoffs or punts.

8) FIELD SET UP

- a) All possession changes will start at the offensive team's 40-yard line. Exception: Interceptions will be placed at the spot the intercepting players flag is pulled. The defense, now the offense will take possession on that point and move toward the goal line.

9) OFFENSE

- a) No intentional contact of any kind is permitted.
- b) Offense will consist of a Center, a Quarterback, 1-2 Running Backs and a Right and Left End and a Split Receiver (who can line up on the line on either side of the ball). There must always be at least one player on the line on either side of the ball.
- c) All blocking is illegal, whether in backfield or downfield the line of scrimmage. Any offensive player who continues running AND impedes the progress of a defensive player who is attempting to pull the ball carrier's flag will be called for illegal blocking.
- d) The ball must be snapped between the center's legs to start a play. Shotgun snaps are allowed.
- e) There is a 45-second huddle clock, which starts once the line of scrimmage is marked and the ball is spotted.
- f) Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. All motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted towards the line of scrimmage. A motioned player does NOT need to stop, prior to the snap of the ball.
- g) All laterals of any kind, anywhere on the field are illegal.
- h) There are NO fumbles in Flag Football. During a play the ball is ruled dead at the spot it hits the ground. Players are not allowed to dive on the ground for a dead ball.
- i) Spinning is permitted.
- j) Jumping or diving to ADVANCE the ball is illegal. However, an offensive player may jump over a defensive player on the ground to avoid a collision. Jumping or diving to catch a pass is permitted.
- k) The ball will be spotted at the location of where the flag was when it was separated from the belt.

10) PASSING

- a) QB has a seven (7) second "pass clock."
- b) If the pass is not thrown within seven seconds, the play is ruled dead, with a loss of down. The ball is placed at the original line of scrimmage.
- c) If the ball is handed off, the seven-second pass rule is no longer in effect.
- d) Passes must be thrown behind the line of scrimmage, including feet. Failure to comply, results in a loss of down.
- e) Only one forward pass per down. All passes must be forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage.



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11) RECEIVING

- a) All players are eligible to receive passes, including the QB, but only if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage first.
- b) A receiver must have at least one foot in bounds when making a catch.
- c) A receiver is down where the flag belt is pulled.
- d) To achieve a first down, or a touchdown, the ball carrier's flag belt must cross the plane of the first down line and/or goal line.
- e) If a receiver's flag inadvertently falls off, even without contact from another player, that player is ruled down at the spot the flag fell off.
- f) If a receiver's flag inadvertently falls off prior to receiving the ball and later in the same play catches the ball without replacing the flag, the receiver will be down immediately at the point of reception.
- g) In the event that a receiver and defender both catch the ball at the same time and both retain possession to the ground, then the tie would go to the receiver, with receiver being down at the point of the tied reception.
- h) A receiver can't willingly run out of bounds and then come back in bounds to catch a ball.

12) RUNNING

- a) Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are legal. Anyone behind the line of scrimmage can receive a handoff. A player must completely let go of the ball, to be considered a legal handoff.
- b) There is no limit to the number of handoffs that can be performed by the offense in a single play, so long as the ball never crosses the line of scrimmage.
- c) The QB can run the ball only if he/she has first handed the ball off behind the line of scrimmage and then taken a "direct" handoff back from another player before the ball has ever crossed the line of scrimmage.
- d) The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball, as long as he or she does not pass the line of scrimmage first.
- e) It is the responsibility of the ball carrier to avoid colliding with defenders that lie in his/her path. Unintentional contact will not be penalized, provided the ball carrier makes an effort to avoid it. Failure to attempt to avoid contact with a defender (charging) may be penalized. Intentional contact will not be tolerated, and may also result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty, and/or player ejection.

13) DEFENSE

- a) No intentional contact of any kind is permitted.
- b) Defensive players cannot pass the line of scrimmage until the ball is handed off.
- c) Defenders must only attempt to grab an offensive player's flags when trying to get them down.
- d) If a defender attempts to pull an offensive player's flags and inadvertently grabs their jersey, the defender must immediately and completely release the jersey before they can reattempt to pull the flag. Failure to do so will result in a holding penalty.
- e) All defensive players must give the offense a one yard cushion prior to the snap of the ball. Diving after a flag IS allowed.

14) FLAG PULLING/GUARDING

- a) Deflagging is the legal removal of a flag from an opponent in possession of the ball. Pushing, striking, holding, slapping, or tripping when attempting to remove a flag during the course of a play is not permitted.
- b) 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, arm, or shoulder or covering the flags with the football jersey.
- c) A legal flag pull takes place when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball.
- d) Defenders can dive to pull flags, but cannot tackle, hold or run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
- e) It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball carrier's possession at any time.



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14) FLAG PULLING/GUARDING (continued)

- f) A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off a player who is not in possession of the ball.
- g) The flag belts (not the flags themselves) must be secured to ensure they do not hang appearing to be a flag. If the belt is hanging, flag guarding may be called.
- h) Shirts/jerseys must be tucked in always. If a shirt/jersey is hanging out, flag guarding may be called.
- i) Offensive players are not permitted to protect or guard their flags. When a flag is clearly removed from the ball carrier, play is stopped, the ball is dead and the down is over. A player removing a flag from the runner should immediately hold the flag above his/her head to indicate to the official that the deflagging (tackle) has taken place. This also assists the official in spotting the ball.
- j) Flags and Flag belts must be worn with belts on each side of the players hips.

15) INTERCEPTIONS

- a) Interceptions can be returned, except on extra-point attempts.
- b) In the event of an interception, all other “defenders,” now the offensive team on the field must stop, and cannot block or impede the offense players from pursuing the ball carrier.
- c) Interception returns
 - i) If a pass intercepted by the defense, except on extra-point attempts, the intercepting player may attempt to return the ball until deflagged, fumbled, run out of bounds, scoring a touchdown, or a penalty is committed.
 - ii) Possession will be awarded intercepting team
 - iii) The distance between where the ball is ruled downed to the near-side 40 yard line will be measured by officials, and the ball will be spotted this same distance from the goal line.
- d) Return for touch-down (“pick-six”)
 - i) If a pass is intercepted by the defense, the intercepting player may attempt to return the ball to the near-side 40-yard line for a touchdown.
 - ii) Extra-point attempt after an intercepted touch-down (“pick-six”) will be made at the endzone.
- e) Endzone Interceptions
 - i) If a pass is intercepted in the endzone, the intercepting player may not attempt a return.
 - ii) Ball will be blown dead
 - iii) Intercepting team takes possession on the near-side 40-yard line.

16) REPLAY OF DOWN/INADVERTENT WHISTLE

- a) If there is an inadvertent whistle during a play, the offense has the choice of either the result of the play at the point the whistle was blown, or replaying the down.
- b) If there is an inadvertent whistle during a passing play and the ball is in flight, the down is replayed.
- c) If a ball falls to or touches the ground during the initial center to quarterback exchange, the play is ruled a “do over” with no loss of down.

17) DEAD BALL

- a) A play is ruled dead when the ball carrier’s flag is pulled, the ball carrier’s flag inadvertently falls off, the ball carrier steps out of bounds, any part of the ball carrier’s body other than hands touch the ground, the ball carrier lets the ball hit the ground, a penalty occurs, QB runs out of time, or after a touchdown or extra point is scored.
- b) There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground, unless the ball carrier loses control of the ball moving forward. It will be placed where the carrier’s feet are when possession is lost.



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18) PENALTIES

- a) Only the head coach may approach the referee. Judgment calls cannot be argued.
- b) A game or half will not end on any accepted live ball defensive penalty or inadvertent whistle.
- c) If the offense throws an interception and commits an infraction after the interception, when the opposing team takes offensive possession, they will get an additional 5 yards from the line of scrimmage.
- d) OFFENSIVE PENALTIES - 5 Yards from Line of Scrimmage and Loss of Down
 - i) False start
 - ii) Offsides
 - iii) Illegal motion
 - iv) Offensive impeding
 - v) Delay of game
 - vi) Coach interference
 - vii) Offensive pass interference
 - viii) Too many players on the field
 - ix) Improper equipment - (missing or improperly placed flags)
- e) OFFENSIVE PENALTIES - 5 Yards from the Spot of Infraction and Loss of Down
 - i) Flag guarding
 - ii) Illegal ball advancement – (jumping or diving to advance the ball, laterals)
 - iii) Intentional contact – (blocking, charging, tackling, tripping, pushing, holding, obstructing, stiff arming)
- f) DEFENSIVE PENALTIES - 5 Yards from the Line of Scrimmage, Automatic First Down
 - i) Roughing the passer
 - ii) Intentionally removing a receiver's flag belt before he/she contacts the ball
 - iii) Illegally rushing the quarterback
 - iv) Too many players on the field
 - v) Coach interference – (remaining/obstructing on the field during a play)
 - vi) Improper equipment - (missing or improperly placed flags)
- g) DEFENSIVE PENALTIES - 5 Yards from the Spot of Infraction, Automatic First Down
 - i) Defensive Pass Interference
 - ii) Intentional contact – (blocking, charging, tackling, tripping, pushing, holding, obstructing, stiff arming)
- h) UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT
 - i) If the field monitor or referee witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the referee's discretion.
 - ii) Ball-carriers MUST make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.
 - iii) Defenders are not allowed to run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.
 - iv) DEFENSIVE UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT- 15 Yards from End of Play, Automatic First Down OFFENSIVE UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT- 15 Yards from Line of Scrimmage and Loss Of Down
- i) EJECTIONS
 - i) Flagrant unsportsmanlike conduct or personal fouls (Tackling, Pass Interference, and Charging)
 - ii) Intentionally Tampering with Equipment
 - iii) At the official's discretion, a player or a coach may be ejected from the field for unsportsmanlike conduct or any flagrant violation of the rules.
 - iv) Any person ejected will leave the field before play resumes. Play will not resume until the ejected coach/player/fan/parent leaves the field.

