



# IMPERIAL VALLEY FLAG FOOTBALL RULE MANUAL

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## 1) Age Divisions

<b>Mitey Mite</b>	9u Division (Age 9,8, 7)
<b>Cadet</b>	10u Division (Age 10, 9)
<b>Jr Pee Wee</b>	11u Division (Age 11,10)
<b>Pee Wee</b>	12u Division (Age 12,11)
<b>Jr Midget</b>	13u Division (Age 13,12)
<b>Midget</b>	15u Division (Age 15, 14)

**\*\* Note: Age cut off is 7/31 of current playing season**

## 2) Game

- 1) At the start of each game, captains from both teams shall meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who shall start with the ball. The visiting team shall call the toss.
- 2) The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense. The loser of the coin toss has the choice of direction. Possession changes to start the second half to the team that started the game on defense.
- 3) The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four (4) plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, they have four (4) plays to score a touchdown.
- 4) If the offensive team fails to cross midfield after four (4) plays, they may elect “punt” on 4<sup>th</sup> down. There is no actual punt; possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its own 5-yard line.
- 5) If the offense fails to score, or fails to cross mid-field in 4 downs, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts its drive at the current spot of the ball.
- 6) All possession changes start on the offense’s 5-yard line, except for interceptions which are live and spotted where flag is pulled.



### 3) Terminology

Boundary Lines	The outer perimeter lines around the field. They include the sidelines, and back of the end zone lines.
Line of Scrimmage	(LOS) An imaginary line running through the point of the football and across the width of the field.
Line-to-Gain	The line the offense must pass to get a first down or score.
Rush Line	An imaginary line running across the width of the field 7 yards (into the defensive side) from the line of the scrimmage.
Offense	The team with possession of the ball.
Defense	The team opposing the offense to prevent it from advancing the ball.
Passer	The offensive player that throws the ball and may or may not be the quarterback.
Rusher	The defensive player assigned to rush the quarterback to prevent him/ her from passing the ball by pulling his/her flags or by blocking the pass.
Downs (1-2-3-4)	The offensive team has four (4) attempts or “downs” to advance the ball. It must cross the line to gain to get another set of downs or to score.
Live Ball	Refers to the period of time that the play is in action. Generally used in regard to penalties. Live ball penalties are considered part of the play and must be enforced before the down is considered complete.
Dead Ball	Refers to the period of time immediately before or after a play.
Whistle	Sound made by an official using a whistle that signifies the end of the play or a stop in the action for a timeout, halftime or the end of the game.



Inadvertent Whistle	Official's whistle that is performed in error.
Charging	An illegal movement of the ball carrier directly at a defensive player who has established position on the field. This includes lowering the head or initiating contact with a shoulder, forearm or the chest.
Flag Guarding	An illegal act by the ball carrier to prevent a defender from pulling the ball carrier's flags by stiff arm, lowering of the elbow or head or by blocking access to the runner's flags with a hand or arm.
Shovel Pass	A legal pitch attempted beyond the line of scrimmage.
Lateral	A backward or sideway toss of the ball by the ball carrier.
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	A rude, confrontational or offensive behavior or language.

#### 4) Eligibility

All players' legal guardians must agree to the IV Flag Football League's waiver form via our website located at [www.ivfootball.org](http://www.ivfootball.org), or in hard copy.

#### 5) Equipment

- 1) The league provides each player with a flag belt and NFL FLAG powered by USA Football reversible NFL jersey. Teams will use the football provided by the league. ***Flags cannot be the same color as either the shorts or pants.***
- 2) **Players must have mouth-pieces on during games.**
- 3) Football cleats must be worn (other sport type are fine) but must not have exposed metal.



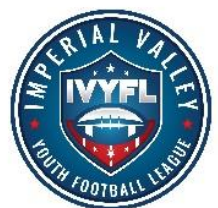
- 4) Players may tape their forearms, hands, and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads, and kneepads. Braces with exposed metals are not allowed.
- 5) Players must remove all caps, watches, earrings, and any other jewelry that the officials deem hazardous.
- 6) Only the official NFL FLAG powered by USA Football NFL reversible jerseys must be worn during official play. Teams can elect to post the players last names on the back of the issued jersey.
- 7) Players' jerseys must be tucked into the shorts/ pants if they hang below the flag belt line.
- 8) Extra flag belt that is not a removable flag must be secured with tape.

## 6) Field

- 1) The field dimensions are 30 yards by 70 yards with two opposite end 10-yard end zones, and a midfield line-to-gain. No-Run zones precede each line-to-gain by 5 yards. However, field size may vary based on the field availability for each league.
- 2) No-Run zones are in place to prevent teams from conducting power run plays. While in the No-Run zones (a 5 yard imaginary zone before midfield and before the end zone), teams cannot run the ball in any fashion (**except the OB if the defense blitzes and crosses the line of scrimmage**). All plays must be pass plays.
- 3) Stepping on the boundary line is considered out of bounds.
- 4) Each offensive squad approaches only TWO No-Run zone in each drive which is one zone 5-yards from midfield to gain the first down, and one zone 5-yards from the goal line to score a TD.

## 7) Rosters

- 1) Home teams wear dark color jerseys; visiting teams wear light color jerseys.



- 2) *The league plays with six (6) players on the field for both offense and defense.*
- 3) *Teams must consist of at least 9 players with a maximum of 12. Waivers are allowed for more players within a team but must not pass 15 players.*
- 4) In the event of an injury, a team with insufficient substitute players may play with five players on the field. If it falls to 4 players or less, the game shall be forfeited.
- 5) **Players can't play on two teams in either division regardless.**
- 6) **Illegal Player(s):** *Player basic roster info and picture shall be posted via the league's website that is password protected where coaches can conduct pre-game check-ins. Coaches are also allowed to file a protest for an illegal player during and/or after a game where the league will conduct its investigation and conclusion. If found guilty of having an illegal player, game shall be forfeited and head coach will be suspended for one game. If a second illegal player incident happens, head coach will be suspended for the entire season and the team shall be put on probation. The league retains the right to add further consequences if such illegal actions persists.*

## 8) Game Times

- 1) Games are played on a forty (40) minute continuous clock with two 20 minute halves.
- 2) Halftime is 5 minutes long.
- 3) **Time outs:** Each team has one (1) 60 second time out per half.
- 4) *Each team has thirty (30) seconds to snap the ball.* Teams will receive one warning per game before a delay of game penalty is enforced.
- 5) The clock stops only for timeouts, and/or series injuries determined by the official.
- 6) Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.



## 9) Over Time Format

- 1) A coin flip will determine the team that chooses to be on offense or defense first.
  - a) If a second round of overtime must be played, the team that lost the coin toss will get to choose offense or defense for the start of the second round of overtime. This process continues with teams alternating who gets to choose to be on offense or defense to start out during every round of overtime.
  - b) The referee will determine which end of the field the overtime will take place on.
- 2) Each team will take turns getting ONE (1) play from the defense's 5-yard line for one point or the defense's 10-yard line for two points. Whether to go for one or two points is up to the offensive team. Whether or not the team that begins on offense converts the team that started on, the defensive side gets a chance on offense to win or tie by converting a one or two point play of their own.
  - a) **Example:** Team A starts on offense and chooses to go for one point from the 5-yard line and is successful. Team B is then on offense and can choose to either go for one point from the 5-yard line to tie and force a second round of overtime or to go for two points from the 10-yard line for the win.
  - b) If the second team on offense in an overtime round fails to beat or match the team that went first, the team that went first wins.
- 3) Both teams must go for two points from the 10-yard line starting with the third round of overtime.
- 4) The final points earned by the winning team in the final overtime will be added onto the winning team's total score. The losing team will not receive any additional points.





- a) Example: End of regulation time, score is 14-14. Team A scores one point and Team B scores two points. Team B wins with a final score of 16-14. Points are only added to the total score from final round of overtime.
- 5) All regulation period rules and penalties are in effect.
- 6) *There are no timeouts in over time.*

## 10) Scoring

- 1) Touchdown is 6 points
- 2) PAT (point after touchdown) **1 point** (5-yard line) or **2 points** (10-yard line)
- 3) **1 point** PAT is pass only; **2 point** PAT can be run or pass. After touchdown, offensive team must declare which PAT conversion they will be attempting to make.
- 4) **Safety:** 2 points
  - a) A safety occurs when the ball carrier is declared down in his/her own end zone. They can be called down when their flags are pulled by a defensive player, their flag falls out, they step out of bounds or they hit the ground with their knee or arm. A safety also occurs when there is an offensive penalty in the end zone.
- 5) **Mercy Rule:** After one team is winning by 35 points or more, the game will be forfeited however, the game will continue in scrimmage mode for the remainder of the game.
- 6) **Forfeits are scored 35-0 for the winning team.**

## 11) Coaches

- 1) Coaches are expected to act professional and adhere to the code of conduct.
- 2) One (1) coach from the mitey mite division (9u) is allowed on the field for the entire game. Coaches from the higher divisions must remain on the side lines when the game is live.



## 12) Live Ball/ Dead Ball

- 1) The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.
- 2) The official shall indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage. It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on defense or offense enters the neutral zone. In regard to the neutral zone, the official may give both teams a “courtesy” neutral zone notification to allow their players to move back behind the line of scrimmage.
- 3) A player who gains possession in the air is considered in bounds as long as one foot comes down in the field of play.
- 4) The defense may not mimic the offensive team signals, by trying to confuse the offensive players, while the quarterback is calling out signals to start the play. This will result in an unsportsmanlike penalty.
- 5) Any official can whistle the play dead.
- 6) Play is ruled dead when:
  - a) The ball hits the ground
  - b) The ball carrier’s flag is pulled
  - c) The ball carrier steps out of bounds
  - d) A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored
  - e) The ball carrier’s knee or arm hits the ground
  - f) The ball carrier’s flag falls out
  - g) The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one or no flag(s)
  - h) The 7-second pass clock expires
  - i) Inadvertent whistle
- 7) **Fumbles:** There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball carrier’s feet were at the time of the fumble.
- 8) **Inadvertent whistle:** In case it happens, the offense has two options:
  - a) Take the ball where it was when the whistle blew and the down is taken



- b) Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage
- 9) A team is allowed to use a time out to question an official's rule interpretation. If the official's ruling is correct, the team will be charged a timeout. If the rule is interpreted incorrectly, the timeout will not be charged and the proper ruling will be enforced. Officials should all agree upon any controversial call in order to give each team the full benefit of each call.

### 13) Running

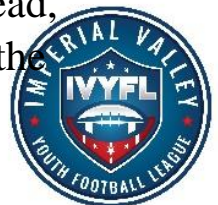
- 1) ***The ball is spotted where the runner's feet are when the flag is pulled,*** not where the ball carrier has the ball. The player's front foot will measure forward progress.
- 2) ***The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball until the defense crosses the rush line via a blitz.*** At that point, the quarterback may scramble, or may advance the ball beyond the line of scrimmage. The quarterback is the offensive player that receives the snap.
- 3) ***Direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted.*** The offense may use multiple handoffs and laterals.
- 4) ***Laterals (tosses) are allowed*** from behind or the side of the offensive players, but must be behind the line of scrimmage.
- 5) **Center sneak play is not allowed.** No handoffs to the center whatsoever however, he/she is eligible to receive a pass but must clear the neutral zone.
- 6) No-Run zones located 5-yards before each end zone and 5-yards on either side of midfield are designed to avoid short yardage power running situations. Teams are not allowed to advance the ball with a run in these zones. **Exception:** QB may run if the defense blitzes and crosses the line of scrimmage.
- 7) The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.



- 8) Once the ball has been handed off or lateraled in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- 9) Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping, or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding.
- 10) Spinning is allowed, but players may not leave their feet to avoid a flag pull. Jumping in the air in a forward motion to advance the ball while attempting to avoid a flag pull is not allowed. Lateral moves to the left or right are permitted.
- 11) Runners may leave their feet if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid collision with another player without a flag guarding penalty enforced.
- 12) **No blocking or screening is allowed at any time.**
- 13) Offensive players must not interfere with the play once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. No running ahead of the ball carrier or preventing the defense from approaching the ball carrier. However, the receiver may continue a route away from the ball carrier.
- 14) **Flag Obstruction:** All jerseys **MUST** be tucked in before each play begins. If the jersey is not long enough, it must not cover the flags whatsoever. The flags must be on the player's hips and free from obstruction. *Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.*

## 14) Passing

- 1) All forward passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage.
- 2) Shovel passes are allowed, but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
- 3) The quarterback has a seven- second "pass clock" if no pass rush occurs. If a pass is not thrown with the seven seconds, play is dead, the down is consumed and there is a 5-yard penalty assessed to the



offense. Once the ball is handed off or lateraled, the 7-second rule no longer is in effect.

a) If the line of scrimmage is less than 10 yards from the team's defensive end zone, the penalty will be assessed as half the distance to the goal at the end of the 7-second clock.

## 15) Receiving

- 1) All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback, if the ball has been handed off or lateraled behind the line of scrimmage).
- 2) 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.
- 3) A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.
- 4) In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
- 5) Interceptions change the possession of the ball at the point of interception.
- 6) *Interceptions are returnable, including conversions after touchdowns.*

## 16) Rushing the Passer

- 1) All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. ***Any number of players can rush the quarterback.*** Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage.
- 2) Once the ball is handed off or lateraled, the 7-yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage and attempt to pull the flag on the ball carrier.
- 3) A special marker, or the referee, will designate a Rush Line 7-yards from the line of scrimmage. The offense is responsible for setting the rush marker in between plays. Defensive players should



verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.

**4) A Legal Rush is:**

- a) Any rush from a point 7-yards from the defensive line of scrimmage.
- b) A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off or lateraled by the quarterback.
- c) If a rusher leaves the rush line early (breaks the 7-yard area), they may return to the rush line, reset and then legally rush the quarterback.
- d) If a rusher leaves the rush line early and the ball is handed off or lateraled before they cross the line of scrimmage, they may legally rush the quarterback.

**5) Penalty may be called:**

- a) The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff or pass. Illegal rush (5-yards LOSS and first down).
- b) Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped. Offside (5-yards LOSS and first down).
- c) Any defensive player not lined up at or beyond the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed or handed off or lateraled. Illegal Rush (5-yards LOSS and first down).

**6) Special Circumstances:**

- a) Teams are not required to rush the quarterback. The 7-second clock to throw the football is in effect.
- b) Teams are not required to identify their rusher(s) before they play however, if they do rush then they must verify with the official that they are in a correct position. The official will place himself at the 7-yard rush line where the rusher(s) can use that set up as a proper starting point.



- c) If the rusher leaves the 7-yard line before the snap, he/she may immediately drop back to act as a defender with no offside penalty.
- 7) Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass (players can jump to attempt to block a pass); however, NO contact can be made with the quarterback in any way. Blocking the pass, or attempting to block the pass and then making contact with the passer will result in a roughing the passer penalty.
- 8) ***The offense can't impede the rusher in any way.*** The rusher has the right to a clear path to the quarterback, regardless of where they line up prior to the snap. If a moving offensive player occupies the path or line, then it is the offense's responsibility to avoid the rusher. Any disruption to the rusher's path and/or contact will result in an impeding the rusher penalty. If the offensive player does not move after the snap, then it is the rusher's responsibility to go around the offensive player and to avoid contact.
- 9) A sack occurs if the quarterback's flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball is placed where the quarterback's feet are when flag is pulled.
  - a) A safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team's end zone. On a safety, the defense is awarded 2 points, and takes over possession of the ball at their own 5-yard line.

## **17) Flag Pulling**

- 1) A legal flag pull takes place when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball.
- 2) Defenders can dive to pull flags, but cannot tackle, hold or run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
- 3) It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball carrier's possession at any time.



- 4) If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during the play, the player is down immediately upon possession of the ball and the play ends.
- 5) A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off a player who is not in possession of the ball.
- 6) ***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 intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey.***

## 18) Formations

- 1) Offense must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage (***the center***) and up to five additional players on the line of scrimmage. The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.
- 2) ***One player at a time may go in motion 1-yard behind the parallel to the line of scrimmage.***
- 3) No motion is allowed towards the line of scrimmage.
- 4) Offensive players must come to a complete stop for one second before the ball is snapped unless he/she is the only player in motion.
- 5) Movement by a player who is set or a player who runs toward the line of scrimmage while in motion is considered a false start.
- 6) The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between his/her legs to a player in the backfield, and the ball must completely leave his/her hands.

## 19) Unsportsmanlike Conduct

- 1) 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. No appeals will be considered. FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE





**TOLERATED. *This league will press criminal charges and if doable, file a civil suit if the situations permits it.***

- 2) Offensive or confrontational language is illegal. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, at the discretion of the referee he/she will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.
- 3) Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach, or official.
- 4) Ball carriers **MUST** make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.
- 5) Defenders are not allowed to run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
- 6) Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship, and code of conduct.
- 7) Fan must not harass officials and/or other teams.
- 8) Fans comments must be clean and profanity free.
- 9) Fans are to keep fields' safe and kid friendly.
- 10) Keep younger kids and equipment such as coolers, chairs, and/or shades at a minimum of 5 yards off the field.

## **20) Penalties**

- 1) The referee will call all penalties.
- 2) Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
- 3) All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted (spot fouls).
- 4) ***Only the team captain or head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players may not question judgement calls.***
- 5) Games may not end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.
- 6) Penalties are assessed live ball or dead ball. Live ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered complete.



7) Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.

### A) Spot Fouls

<b>Defensive Pass Interference</b>	Automatic 1 <sup>st</sup> Down
<b>Holding</b>	+5 yards & automatic 1 <sup>st</sup> down
<b>Stripping</b>	+10 yards & automatic 1 <sup>st</sup> down
<b>Defensive Unnecessary Roughness</b>	+10 yards & automatic 1 <sup>st</sup> down
<b>Screening, Blocking or Running in front of the Ball Carrier</b>	-5 yards & loss of down
<b>Charging</b>	-10 yards & loss of down
<b>Flag Guarding</b>	-10 yards & loss of down
<b>Offensive Unnecessary Roughness</b>	-10 yards & loss of down

### B) Defensive Penalties

<b>Offside</b>	+5 yards from line of scrimmage & automatic 1 <sup>st</sup> down
<b>Illegal Rush- Starting rush from inside 7-yard marker</b>	+5 yards from line of scrimmage & automatic 1 <sup>st</sup> down
<b>Illegal Flag Pull- Before the receiver has the ball</b>	+5 yards from the line of scrimmage & automatic 1 <sup>st</sup> down
<b>Roughing the Passer</b>	+10 yards from line of scrimmage & automatic 1 <sup>st</sup> down
<b>Taunting</b>	+10 yards from line of scrimmage & automatic 1 <sup>st</sup> down
<b>Defensive Pass Interference</b>	SPOT FOUL, automatic 1 <sup>st</sup> down
<b>Holding</b>	SPOT FOUL, +5 yards & automatic 1 <sup>st</sup> down
<b>Stripping</b>	SPOT FOUL, +10 yards & automatic 1 <sup>st</sup> down
<b>Defensive Unnecessary Roughness</b>	SPOT FOUL, +10 yards & automatic 1 <sup>st</sup> down



### C) Offensive Penalties

<b>Offside/ False Stat</b>	-5 yards from line of scrimmage & LOSS of down
<b>Illegal Forward Pass (Pass received behind the line of scrimmage or throwing a pass after crossing the line of scrimmage)</b>	-5 yards from line of scrimmage & LOSS of down
<b>Offensive Pass Interference</b>	-5 yards from the line of scrimmage & LOSS of down
<b>Illegal Motion (More than one person moving)</b>	-5 yards from line of scrimmage & LOSS of down
<b>Delay of Game</b>	-5 yards from line of scrimmage & LOSS of down
<b>Impeding the Rusher</b>	-5 yards from line of scrimmage & LOSS of down
<b>Screening, Blocking or Running ahead of the ball carrier</b>	SPOT FOUL, -5 yards & LOSS of down
<b>Charging</b>	SPOT FOUL, -10 yards & LOSS of down
<b>Flag Guarding</b>	SPOT FOUL, -10 yards & LOSS of down
<b>Offensive Unnecessary Roughness</b>	SPOT FOUL, -10 yards & LOSS of down

