



# Adult Flag Football Rules

Maple Valley Parks & Recreation ★ [www.maplevalleywa.gov](http://www.maplevalleywa.gov)

**NFHS rules will govern league play with the following exceptions.**

## Rule 1 – The Field of Play

### SECTION 1 SIZE OF THE FIELD

**ART. 1 ...** The field of play shall be 74 yards long by 30 yards wide. The field of play shall be split into three 20-yard sections with 7-yard end zones at each end.

**ART. 2 ...** No-run zones shall precede each end zone by 3 yards. Plays snapped from inside the no-run zone cannot be running plays of any fashion.

## Rule 2 – The Ball

### SECTION 1 SPECIFICATIONS

**ART. 1 ...** The official game ball will be a youth sized football. Teams may provide their own ball provided it is a youth size and the opponent may use the same ball while on offense/defense. Game balls will be provided by Maple Valley Parks & Recreation.

## Rule 3 – The Players

### SECTION 1 NUMBER OF PLAYERS

**ART. 1 ...** Teams shall play with 6 players on the field. Players must be 18 years of age.

**ART. 2 ...** A team's roster is limited to 12 players and players may add/drop until the roster lock deadline.

**ART. 3 ...** Players must participate in at least 3 league games to be eligible for postseason play.

**ART. 4 ...** Players may only participate on one team in the entire flag football league, regardless of division.

a. If a player's eligibility is questioned he/she must produce identification to the game officials. If photo identification cannot be produced, the player may not participate and the game is forfeited.

b. If a player is found to have illegally played, the team using the illegal player will forfeit. If the player is not currently on a roster and played for two teams in the same division, both teams will be required to forfeit.

c. Players from another team in the same division may be used to avoid a forfeit only. Teams may only play with 5 players on the field if using players from a team in the same division.

**ART. 5 ...** A game shall not be started with fewer than 5 properly uniformed players on each team. If, after the game has begun, a team has fewer than 5 eligible players, the game shall be forfeited.

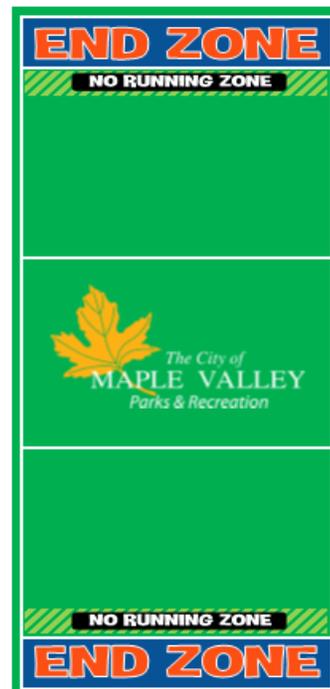
**ART. 6 ...** Teams have a 5-minute grace period from the game's printed start time to field a minimum of 5 players. The grace period **will not** be deducted from play and the game shall start late.

## Rule 4 – Player Equipment

### SECTION 1 REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

**ART. 1 ...** The required player equipment includes a jersey, shorts or athletic pants, Triple Threat flag belt, and suitable shoes. **Cleats must be plastic, nylon or molded rubber. Metal cleats are prohibited.**

a. **Tying Flag Belts:** Any player found tying the flag belt will be penalized 8-yards from the spot of the first attempted pull by a defender and a loss of down. If there is no pull attempt, the penalty will be



30 YARDS

74 YARDS

enforced from the original line of scrimmage. A second occurrence will result in the player's ejection from the game.

b. If a player uses receiving gloves, "stick-um" or other foreign substances are prohibited.

**ART. 2 ...** Each team will be required to have similar jerseys before the first league game and jerseys must always be tucked in. Jerseys must have 4-6 inch numbers in clear view.

**ART. 3 ...** Helmets, shoulder pads, thigh pads or the use of any hard substance is prohibited. Medical equipment (casts, etc.) must be cleared by the game officials before participating.

## **Rule 7 – Duration of the Game & Quarter Length**

### **SECTION 1 LENGTH OF QUARTERS & STOP CLOCK PERIOD**

**ART. 1 ...** A running clock shall be used and 4 equal quarters of 10 minutes shall be played.

a. The clock will run during extra-point attempts so long as it is **not** during the stop-clock period.

**ART. 3 ... STOP CLOCK PERIOD:** The last minute of the 4th quarter will be played with stop clock. The clock shall stop for all incomplete passes, out of bounds, penalties, and time outs so long as neither team is ahead by 10 points or more.

**ART. 4 ...** Play shall be extended beyond the expiration of time if a defensive penalty is accepted.

### **SECTION 2 INTERVALS BETWEEN QUARTERS**

**ART. 1 ...** The halftime interval shall not exceed 5 minutes.

### **SECTION 3 THE PLAY CLOCK**

**ART. 1 ...** Each team has 25 seconds to snap the ball, from between the center's legs, once the ball is signaled "ready for play" by the official.

a. Teams failing to put the ball into play will be penalized for "delay of game." Any other delay of game infraction during the same possession will result in a loss of down and another distance penalty.

### **SECTION 4 TIMEOUTS**

**ART. 1 ...** Each team shall have three 60-second time outs per game and one 60-second time out per overtime period. Overtime time outs may not be accumulated.

**ART. 2 ...** A team may use a timeout 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.

### **SECTION 5 TIE GAMES**

**ART. 1 ...** In the event of a tie, a coin toss will be conducted and an overtime period shall be played. Possession shall alternate between teams with the ball being placed on the defensive team's 20-yard line; it shall be "first and goal." The series shall end if one team scores and the opposing team is unable to match the point total. If the game is still tied after the first OT period, another OT is played with the defend/receive roles flipped. Overtime shall be repeated until a winner is determined. From the third OT period on, teams must go for two points after a touchdown. All points recorded in any overtime period shall be recorded as part of the final score.

## **Rule 8 – The Start of Play**

### **SECTION 1 KICKOFF**

**ART. 1 ...** A pre-game coin toss shall be conducted and the winner shall decide between kicking, receiving or choosing a side to defend. No deferring. The AWAY team shall call the coin toss. There shall be no kickoffs and teams shall start the game on their own 10-yard line.

### **SECTION 2 THE SNAP**

**ART. 1 ...** The ball shall be snapped from between the center's legs.

**ART. 2 ...** If the ball is fumbled during any snap, play shall be whistled dead.

## **Rule 9 – The Line of Scrimmage**

### **SECTION 1 OFFENSIVE RESPONSIBILITIES**

**ART. 1 ...** The offensive team must have at least 3 players on the line of scrimmage to begin any play and lineman must have at least 1-yard of space between them.

**ART. 2 ...** The offensive team is responsible for returning the ball to an official (even after a failed 4th down attempt) or the line of scrimmage promptly.

## **Rule 10 – Blocking**

### **SECTION 1 BLOCKING**

**ART. 1 ...** Stationary screening in the backfield or downfield shall be allowed but the player setting the screen must (a) not be moving and (b) give the defensive player a chance to avoid the screen, typically one-two steps.

**ART. 2 ...** Players screening must have their arms held against their body and may not extend their arms at any point during the play, similar to a basketball screen.

## **Rule 11 – Rushing the Quarterback**

### **SECTION 1 QB RUSH**

**ART. 1 ...** Any number of defensive players may rush the quarterback but must start their rush 5-yards from the line of scrimmage as indicated by the referees. Defensive players may position themselves on the line of scrimmage but may not rush the quarterback.

**ART. 2 ...** Once the initial QB hands off/passes/pitches the ball, all defensive players may cross the line of scrimmage.

### **SECTION 2 ROUGHING THE PASSER**

**ART. 1 ...** Defensive players shall not contact the passer. Defenders may attempt to deflect the ball but will be penalized if contact is made with the passer.

## **Rule 12 – Receiving**

### **SECTION 1 ELIGIBILITY**

**ART. 1 ...** During any play, all players are eligible to receive a pass.

### **SECTION 2 FORWARD HAND OFFS/PASSES/PITCHES & ADVANCING THE BALL**

**ART. 1 ...** The ball may be advanced over the line of scrimmage immediately after a forward hand off/pass/pitch only. If the ball is lateraled before crossing the line of scrimmage, the ball must be handed off/passed/pitched forward before being advanced.

*EXAMPLE* If player A15 receives the snap and hands off forwards to A30, A30 may advance the ball over the line of scrimmage by running or passing. Additionally, once A15 hands off/passes/pitches the ball, all defensive players may cross the line of scrimmage.

**ART. 2 ...** A pass may be thrown forward multiple times behind the line before being passed over the line of scrimmage.

**ART. 3 ...** A forward hand off/pass/pitch across the line of scrimmage may be lateraled back across the line but cannot be handed off/passed/pitched forward a second time.

**ART. 4 ...** A quarterback may catch his/her own pass and advance across the line of scrimmage provided the pass has been touched by another player.

### **SECTION 3 POSSESSION**

**ART. 1 ...** A receiver's "first foot" must be inbounds and have clear possession of the ball when making a reception. "Inbounds" and "receiver possession" are judgment calls made by the game official.

**ART. 2 ...** Receivers shall be declared down when any part of the ball carrier's body, except the hand or foot, touches the ground or if the ball carrier falls and loses possession of the ball.

## **Rule 13 – Ball Carrying**

### **SECTION 1 GENERAL**

**ART. 1 ...** When the flag is pulled, the position of the player's hips shall determine where the ball is spotted on the field except at the goal line. The ball may be extended over the goal line to score.

**ART. 2 ...** Ball carriers must have their flag belt un-clipped to be considered down. If a ball carrier's flag inadvertently falls off, the carrier may be downed by a one-hand touch.

**ART. 3 ...** Ball carriers may not run through a defensive player, "stiff arm," jump or hurdle or dive. Ball carriers may spin but must always have one foot on the ground.

**ART. 4 ...** Ball carriers shall not be held by the defense while attempting to pull the flag.

**ART. 5 ...** Ball carriers shall not guard his/her flags to prevent them from being pulled.

## **Rule 14 – Fumbles & Laterals**

### **SECTION 1 SNAPS & LATERALS**

**ART. 1 ...** All fumbled balls are dead immediately.

**ART. 2 ...** Dropped laterals, forward or backward, shall be considered dead. Illegal forward laterals are not considered dead until the ball touches the ground. If an illegal forward lateral is caught, possession changes to the team who caught the lateral.

## **Rule 15 – Punting**

### **SECTION 1 THE PUNT**

**ART. 1 ...** The offensive team must notify the game officials and defense when they are punting.

**ART. 2 ...** Each team must have 3 players on the line of scrimmage and neither team may cross the line of scrimmage until the ball is punted.

**ART. 3 ...** Punts shall be kicked, not thrown, within five seconds of receiving the snap and may not be blocked.

**ART. 4 ...** All punts resulting in a touchback shall be placed at the team's 10 yard line.

**ART. 5 ...** The offensive team is responsible for returning the ball to an official or the line of scrimmage promptly, including any fourth down attempt.

### **SECTION 2 FUMBLING PUNT RETURNS**

**ART. 1 ...** Any punt that is fumbled by the returner shall be considered dead immediately.

**ART. 2 ...** After a punt, the ball may be picked up off the ground and advanced provided the ball was not fumbled.

## **Rule 16 – Scoring**

### **SECTION 1 VALUES**

**ART. 1 ...** Touchdowns shall result in 6 points.

**ART. 2 ...** Extra points completed from the 3-yard line shall result in 1 point. All extra points attempted from the 3-yard line must be a passing play.

**ART. 3 ...** Extra points completed from the 10-yard line shall result in 2 points.

**ART. 4 ...** Safeties shall result in 2 points.

### **SECTION 2 TWO POINT CONVERSIONS**

**ART. 1 ...** 2 points shall be awarded to the defensive team returning the ball for a touchdown if the ball is intercepted while the offense is attempting an extra point conversion of any value.

a. There shall be no extra point attempt following a score from an intercepted conversion try.

b. The team that intercepted the ball and returned it for a touchdown shall receive possession of the ball on the ten yard line to restart play.

### **SECTION 3 SAFETIES**

**ART. 1 ...** A safety is recorded when the defending team causes a live ball to go back over the goal line or if the ball becomes dead in the end zone. The free kick following a safety does not need to be snapped. The free kick will occur from the 10-yard line.

## **Rule 17 – Penalties & Suspensions**

### **SECTION 1 LOSS OF DOWN OR AUTOMATIC FIRST DOWN**

- ART. 1** ... Defensive pass interference, spot foul.
- ART. 2** ... Flag guarding, five yards from spot of foul.
- ART. 3** ... Illegal forward pass, five yards.
- ART. 4** ... Illegal advancement, five yards.
- ART. 5** ... Intentional grounding, five yards.
- ART. 6** ... Offensive pass interference, eight yards.
- ART. 7** ... Roughing the passer, eight yards.
- ART. 8** ... Tying the flag belt, eight yards.
- ART. 9** ... Personal foul and unsportsmanlike conduct, eight yards.

### **SECTION 2 FIVE YARD PENALTY**

- ART. 1** ... Delay of game.
- ART. 2** ... Illegal substitution.
- ART. 3** ... Offsides, dead ball-no free play.
- ART. 4** ... False start.
- ART. 5** ... Punting infractions.
- ART. 6** ... Illegal forward pitch.
- ART. 7** ... Line of scrimmage infractions.
- ART. 8** ... Illegal motion.
- ART. 9** ... Encroachment/illegal rush.
- ART. 10** ... Illegal team or personal action or conduct.
- ART. 11** ... Holding.
- ART. 12** ... Illegal offensive formation.

### **SECTION 3 EIGHT YARD PENALTY**

- ART. 1** ... Persons illegally on the field.
- ART. 2** ... Illegal use of the hand or arm.
- ART. 3** ... Striking, kicking, kneeing, clipping, or tripping.
- ART. 4** ... Stripping, batting at or striking the ball without pulling an opponent's flags.
- ART. 5** ... Blocking or charging.
- ART. 6** ... Pushing.
- ART. 7** ... Intentionally de-flagging a player without the ball.
- ART. 9** ... Fair catch interference.
- ART. 10** ... Excessive profanity.

### **SECTION 4 FLAGRANT PENALTIES**

- ART. 1** ... Any flagrant, deliberate, or excessive contact foul-in the judgment of the referee-shall result in a player's ejection from the game.

### **SECTION 5 UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT PENALTIES**

- ART. 1** ... Unsportsmanlike penalties include verbal abuse of officials, opponents and teammates and taunting.
- ART. 2** ... Any player receiving two (2) unsportsmanlike conduct penalties during a single game shall be ejected and may be suspended additional games.

### **SECTION 6 SPECIAL SITUATIONS**

- ART. 1** ... **Intentional grounding occurring in the end zone**, if accepted shall result in a safety (see rule 16.3.)
- ART. 2** ... **Defensive penalties occurring in the end zone**, if accepted shall result in the ball being spotted at the one yard line.

**ART. 3 ... 10-Second Run Off:** Offensive false-start penalties, occurring during the stop-clock period, shall result in a 10-second run off from the official game clock. If the game clock expires as a result of the penalty, the game shall end.

a. The defensive team has the option of declining the 10-second run off.

b. Consecutive offensive penalties occurring during the stop-clock period shall result in an additional 10-second run off and a loss of down.

**ART. 4 ... Unsportsmanlike Penalty during an Extra Point Attempt.** Should a player commit an unsportsmanlike penalty during an extra point attempt and all game officials agree the opponent would have scored, the score will be counted and the penalty enforced on the kickoff.

**ART. 5 ...** If an official sounds an inadvertent whistle, the offense shall have the choice of accepting the play when it was whistled dead or replaying the down.

a. If a change of possession occurs before the inadvertent whistle, the ball shall be awarded to the team in possession at the spot when whistled dead.

b. If an official's inadvertent whistle prevents an obvious touchdown from being recorded, the touchdown may be awarded following a unanimous decision made by all game officials.

## **SECTION 7 SUSPENSIONS**

**ART. 1 ...** Any player who is ejected from a game shall be suspended for a minimum of one (1) game and may be subject to further suspension. Any suspension occurring in the final league or playoff game shall carry over into the following season.

**ART. 2 ...** Any player who is ejected must leave the park immediately (out of sight, out of sound) or his/her team shall forfeit the game.

**ART. 3 ...** Any player suspended shall not accompany the team to any scheduled games during his/her suspensions.

## **THREATENING ANOTHER PLAYER – ALL SPORTS**

Any player verbally threatening another player (i.e. "I'll meet you in the parking lot") will be ejected from the game and suspended a minimum of one additional game. Threatening another player will also result in the police being called. Threatening another player has no place in the City of Maple Valley.

## **FORFEITS**

A team that forfeits **two games** during the season may be suspended from further league play and will not be eligible for the postseason playoffs. Team fees will not be refunded for forfeits.

[Special Note]

## **Intentional Grounding of Forward Pass**

Intentional grounding of a forward pass is a foul: loss of down and 5 yards from previous spot if passer is in the field of play or loss of down at the spot of the foul if it occurs more than ten yards behind the line or a safety if passer is in his own end zone when ball is released.

Intentional grounding will be called when a passer, facing an imminent loss of yardage due to pressure from the defense, throws a forward pass without a realistic chance of completion.

Intentional grounding will not be called when a passer, while out of the pocket and facing an imminent loss of yardage, throws a pass that lands at or beyond the line of scrimmage, even if no offensive player(s) have a realistic chance to catch the ball (including if the ball lands out of bounds over the sideline or end line).