

Loveland Parks and Recreation – Flag Football Rules – Fall 2025

Game

1. Both teams will meet at the middle of the field and the officials will check each players uniform and check for correctly put on flag belt.
2. A coin toss is used to begin each game. Captains from both teams will meet at midfield. Away team calls the toss, heads or tails, before the coin is tossed.
3. The winner of the coin toss has the choice to receive or to kick (or have the receiving team start from their 20-yard line). The other team chooses which end to defend. There is no option to defer to second half.
4. Teams will begin play at their own 20-yard line to start each half.
5. Teams play 6 vs 6, always maintain an equal number of players.
6. **All levels:** The offensive team has four downs to cross the next zone line for a first down or a score. On 4th (or any other down) the offense may choose to punt by having the other team begin at their own 20-yard line.
7. **1st & 2nd Grade:** All possessions other than interceptions begin at 20-yard line. **All other divisions:** Only automatic kickoffs and punts begin at 20-yard line. Any other turnover will begin where the ball is at the end of the play where the turnover occurred.
8. Teams change sides to start the second half. The team that began the game on defense will begin the second half with the ball for offense.
9. One coach per team is allowed in the offensive and defensive huddles.
10. When referee calls “Play”, coaches must remain silent until the play is over.

Player Uniform

1. Youth Athletic t-shirt (home is red, away is white).
2. Players’ shirts must be tucked in at all times.
3. Tennis shoes or non-metal cleats.
4. No padding or headgear shall be worn with the exception of softshell helmets and stocking hats for cold weather.
5. No jewelry. Players must remove any other items deemed hazardous by officials.

Time

1. Games are 40 minutes – Two 20-minute halves.
2. Halftime is 5 minutes (change ends for second half).
3. Once the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball.
4. Each team gets two (2) 30-second timeouts per half. First half timeouts do not carry over to second half. Timeouts stop the clock.
5. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion. The clock stops for an injury and restarts after the player is removed from field. After an injury that stops the clock, the injured player must be removed from the game for at least one play.
6. No Overtime.

Start of Halves

1. All plays to begin a half will start at the 20-yard line of the offense.

Punt

1. On 4th (or any other down) the offense may choose to punt by having the other team begin at their own 20-yard line.
2. The offense must announce that it's punting.
3. **1st & 2nd Grade:** No punts. Play will begin at the 20-yard line after an unsuccessful attempt on fourth down.

Scoring

1. Touchdown: 6 points (1st & 2nd Grade 7 points and no extra play).
2. Extra play: 1 point (Successful from 5 yards out)
3. Extra play: 2 points (Successful from 10 yards out)
4. Extra play: 2 points (Interception returned for score)

Offense – Formation

1. Must have at least three players on the line of scrimmage. The center, plus two other players that may line up anywhere else on the line of scrimmage.
2. Players must set for at least one second prior to the snap, other than a player in motion.
3. Only one player is allowed in motion prior to the snap and cannot be moving toward the line of scrimmage.
4. Quarterback or other player must receive the snap. The first player to receive the snap may not advance the ball past the line of scrimmage without handing the ball to another player.
5. Side snaps are allowed.
6. A player may play the quarterback position for a maximum of 1 half.

Offense – Blocking

1. There will be no blocking.
2. Once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage rushing the ball or a forward pass is caught beyond the line of scrimmage, all other offensive players must stop until the conclusion of the play.
3. The defense must avoid the offensive players standing still, but if the offense moves to hinder the defense's ability to make a play they will be called for illegal blocking.

Offense – Passing

1. Passes must be thrown overhand from behind the line of scrimmage to a player that is either behind or in front of the line of scrimmage.
2. Laterals or pitches are allowed behind the line of scrimmage only.
3. Screen passes and shovel passes are allowed to any receiver that is at or behind the line of scrimmage.
4. On a fumble or muffed snap, the ball becomes dead when control is lost by the offensive player.
5. The quarterback is allowed to throw the ball away to avoid a sack, but the ball must go beyond the line of scrimmage.

Offense – Receiving

1. All players are eligible to receive a pass.
2. A receiver must have at least one foot in bounds when making the reception.

Offense – Running

1. The first player to receive the snap from the center also known as the quarterback may not advance with the ball beyond the

line of scrimmage unless the ball is handed to another player first.

2. The ball carrier may not jump or dive with the ball.
3. Any number of handoffs or laterals are allowed as long as they are behind the line of scrimmage.
4. A player receiving a hand off may throw the ball forward as long as they are behind the line of scrimmage.
5. Center sneak is not allowed. The center may not receive the first handoff of the play.
6. Flag belts must be clipped and may not be tied.
7. Flag guarding is not allowed. This is the attempt by the ball carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flag belt by stiff arming, dropping the hand, arm, shoulder or head, or intentionally covering the flags with the football, t-shirt or other clothing.
8. On a fumble, the ball becomes dead when control is lost by the ball carrier.

Defense – Formation

1. No more than 3 players may line up between the line of scrimmage and the rush cone.
2. The Rush cone will be set at 7 yards from the line of scrimmage.
3. Only the designated rusher may rush the offense unless the ball is lateraled by the quarterback to another offensive player.

Defense – Rushing

1. The player or players on the defense wishing to rush the quarterback must start behind and be within 1 yard of the rush cone.

2. The Rusher shall be given an unhindered path to rush from starting from their starting position to where the quarterback receives the snap.
3. If the rusher deviates from the rush lane, they must avoid the offense as they move within the play but may not be blocked.
4. If the ball is handed off, any defender may cross the line of scrimmage to pull a flag no matter if they were lined up behind the rush cone or not.
5. The Rusher may not make contact with the quarterback and must go for the flag only.
6. If contact is made with the quarterback, there will be a roughing the passer penalty thrown.
7. If contact is made with the rusher while they are in their rush lane or if the judgement of the official is that the rusher was impeded in his rush lane by a member of the offense a penalty for illegal blocking will be called.
8. Players must always go for the flag, not the ball, including on a pass.

Defense – Deflagging

1. A legal flag pull occurs when a defender removes the flag belt from the ball carrier and holds the flag belt above head standing at the spot. Do not wave flag belt.
2. No diving for the flag. Defender must stay on their feet.
3. Defender may not hold, tackle, or run through the ball carrier when attempting to de-flag.
4. Defenders may not strip the ball from the carrier. Go for the flag only.
5. If the ball carrier's flag belt inadvertently falls off during the play, they may be

downed with a one-hand touch between
the shoulders and the knees.

Penalties – General

1. The officials will call all penalties.
 2. The officials' judgment calls are not to be questioned.
 3. Only team captains and head coaches may ask officials questions about rule clarification and rule interpretations.
 4. All penalties will be assessed from the Line of Scrimmage.
 5. Games cannot end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines.
 6. If the distance to the goal is less than the penalty yardage, then the penalty will be assessed half the distance to the goal.
 7. Loss of down mean that down is used.
 8. If the officials or field supervisor witness any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking, or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player, coach, or spectator will be ejected from the game. Foul and inappropriate play will not be tolerated.
3. The play is ruled "dead" when:
 - a. Ball carrier's flag is pulled.
 - b. Ball carrier steps out of bounds
 - c. Incomplete pass
 - d. Ball hits the ground on a fumble or muffed snap.
 - e. Touchdown, extra play, or safety is scored
 - f. Ball carrier's knee touches the ground
 4. In the case of an inadvertent whistle the offense has two options:
 - a. Take the ball where it was when the whistle blew, the down is done.
 - b. Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.

Penalties

1. All offensive penalties with the exception of unsportsmanlike penalties will be a 5-yard penalty and loss of down.
2. All defensive penalties with the exception of unsportsmanlike penalties will be a 5-yard penalty and automatic first down for the offense.
3. Unsportsmanlike penalties will be 15-yard penalty and loss of down/automatic first down.

Live Ball / Dead Ball

1. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
2. Teams may have no more than six players on the field at a time.