

# Flex Football Rule Book

NFX reserves the right to modify or change these rules at any time throughout the season.  
Updated as of January 2020

This rule book outlines the playing rules for Flex Football, a limited-contact 9-on-9 football game that incorporates soft-shelled helmets and shoulder pads. For any rules not specifically addressed below, refer to the NCAA rule book.

## **Team Size and Groupings**

- Each team has nine players on the field (9 on 9).
- The age groups mentioned in this rule book are for the common school grade ie k-2nd and 3rd grade and up. If your organization is grouped in another manner, the coordinating ages are listed in the following “grade (years old +/- 1 year)”: K(5), 1st(6), 2nd(7), 3rd (8), 4th(9), 5th (10), 6th(11) etc

## **Required/Recommended Equipment**

- Mouth guards, approved soft shell helmets and soft shell shoulder pads are mandatory and must be readily visible to the game official.
- Cleats are required (no metal cleats or metal spikes)

## **Banned Equipment**

- Metal spikes; hard casts; **unapproved** (non Rocksolid) soft shell shoulder pads or soft shell helmets; baseball caps of any kind; jewelry: including rings, necklaces and watches.
- Scrum caps, karate helmets, headbands or any other non-approved helmet is not allowed.
- Beanies and skull caps/wraps are permitted under helmet.
- Wearing any banned equipment on the field results in a delay of game penalty.
- Players wearing banned equipment are not allowed back onto the field until the banned equipment is removed.

## **Coaches**

The following applies to all coaching staffs:

- Each coach is expected to read and understand all stated rules in this booklet. Any questions should be directed to the league commissioner.
- All football personnel and coaches will abide by the Flex Football Coaches Code of Conduct or your organization’s Code of Conduct. Any violation of these rules can result in possible expulsion from your coaching privileges.
- If any coach deliberately and flagrantly violates these rules, the league may suspend the coach without prior notice.
- The game officials are empowered to eject any coach or parent from a game if that coach or parent is acting unsportsmanlike, using foul language or is causing a disruption to the game. Swearing at a game official because you do not agree with a call is not acceptable and will not be permitted.

### **Coaches on the Field -**

- For 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and younger (8U), a maximum of 2 coaches per team can be on the field on both sides of the ball
- For grades 4<sup>th</sup> grade and up (10U+), a maximum of 1 coach per team is allowed on the field on the offensive side of the ball only.
- Unless helping a younger, inexperienced athlete into proper position, these coaches shall remain a minimum of 10 yards behind all participating players after approaching the line of scrimmage.
- Once the team has broken the huddle, coaches on the field cannot talk except to assist players getting into correct position. On-field coaches must be silent once the quarterback begins his cadence.
- This rule does not apply to coaches on the sideline.

### **Down Marker**

The following shall apply to down marker responsibilities:

- It is the responsibility of the home team to supply down marker volunteers, though volunteers can come from either side if necessary.
- Down markers can be sticks or cones but must accurately mark 10 yards.
- At minimum, this duty must consist of one volunteer who places the first-down marker cone 10 yards ahead as the line-to-gain and then marks the line of scrimmage with the down box.
- If not using chains, one cone will mark the 1<sup>st</sup> down and the other cone will mark the ball spot

### **Game officials**

- The NCAA rule serves as the foundation for all rules and penalties unless specified otherwise below.
- There will be a minimum of two (2) game officials provided per game, though three or more is suggested, especially for older ages once passing is more prevalent.
- Game officials are instructed to identify to coaches the player who commits a penalty by name, number or position on the field.
- Game officials have the final say on-field for all matters and will apply all rules to maintain safety.
- The game officials are to be treated as professionals. If coaches have a concern with the conduct of any game official, notify the league president following the game.
- Game officials are expected to have the rule book in hand no later than two weeks before the start of the season and are expected to know its contents.
- Game officials are expected to have all necessary equipment, which includes a penalty flag, bean bag, whistle, stopwatch and notepad.
- The head game official is suggested to note each flagrant foul by a player's name or number for tracking records.
- The head game official also is suggested to write down and report any other pertinent information regarding a coach, player or parent of a team who has committed an infraction that infringes on the sanctity of the game.

### **GAME PLAY**

1. There is no coin toss – The visiting team starts with possession in the 1<sup>st</sup> half. The home team starts with possession in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half.
2. 20-minute halves. 5-minute halftime. There is a running clock that only stops for injuries/player safety and timeouts within regular gameplay.

3. Dead balls that stop the clock within the final two minutes of the game are: incomplete passes, any play that ends out of bounds, scoring plays, change of possession, timeouts and extra point tries. The clock will also stop for all injury timeouts and official timeouts, restarting at the head officials ready to play signal.
  4. Each team is entitled to 1 one-minute timeout per half. The clock restarts on the snap following any team time out.
  5. A 30-second play clock is enforced with the play clock beginning following the spot of the ball and at the head game official's signal.
  6. If no scoreboard is present, the head game official – or a fellow official he designates during pregame – is the official timekeeper and scorekeeper.
  7. If a team is losing by 13 or more points within the final two minutes, the clock does not stop for any reason other than timeouts, injury timeouts and official timeouts. If the losing team scores to create a deficit of 12 or fewer, the two minute time rules apply.
- There are no kickoffs. Play starts at the 40-yard line - game start and turnovers.
  - The direction of offensive play will go in one direction.
  - If a ball is intercepted: the defender needs to only return the interception to the 40-yard line to be considered a Defensive touchdown.
  - If playing with two separate games on one traditional field:
  - When both offenses are back to back within their respective field of play and player safety is a concern. The game official on one side can call an official time out to stop the clock and let the other game progress further down the field to allow for more space in case of a quarterback scramble.
  - There are nine players on each side of the ball, including a center and two Tackles on offense.
  - Unbalanced lines are not allowed. One Tackle must be on either side of the center.
  - Five players are required on the line of scrimmage with either tight ends or split ends joining the three linemen. Two players must be on the line on each side of the center.
  - All players, except for the center, must be in a 2-point stance.
  - The quarterback may take a direct snap from under center or in the shotgun position.

### **Substitutions and injured players**

- Free substitutions are in effect at all times between plays.
- If the offense subs in, the defense must have a chance to sub before the snap is allowed.
  - If the official delays the snap to allow the defense time to match the substitution, the delay of game penalty shall not be called on the offense.
  - If, however, the official determines the offense is substituting late to run additional time off the clock, a delay of game penalty can be assessed.
- If an injured player remains down on the field, struggles to leave the field or needs assistance, the official will signal for the clock to stop. The play clock and game clock both restart upon the player leaving the field, the ball being set and both sides being ready to play.

### **Procedure for injured players**

- If any game official stops play for an injured player or players to be checked/assisted, the injured player must leave the field for at least one play. A team may not “buy” a player back into the game through use of a time out.
- Head injuries. Any player who receives a head injury – whether a concussion, contusion, cut or other – during practice, pregame warm-ups or in-game is not allowed to return to play until cleared by a qualified medical professional.

### **Passing**

- A forward pass that falls incomplete returns to the line of scrimmage.
- A lateral pass that is thrown behind or in front of the line of scrimmage and touches the ground is blown dead and returned to the spot where the ball touched the ground.
- A pass is determined to be forward or lateral based on the direction it travels, not by how it is delivered (i.e. overhand, underhand, side arm, etc.).
- The quarterback may spike the ball to stop the clock within the final two minutes of the game, providing all offensive players are set. The two minute clock rules still apply. If players are not set, an illegal procedure penalty is enforced and the clock restarts on setting the ball.

### **Receiving**

- Only eligible receivers and a quarterback who has first handed the ball off or thrown a legal lateral pass can be the initial receiver on a forward pass.
- Players must get one foot down in bounds for a completed pass.
- If an offensive and defensive player catch a ball simultaneously and forward progress is stopped, the ball is declared dead at that spot and awarded to the offense.
- The three players lined up at center and Tackle may not catch a forward pass unless it is first touched by an eligible receiver or defensive player. If an ineligible receiver does take possession of a forward pass or handoff – legal or illegal – the play is blown dead at that spot.

### **Blocking**

- Lead blocking on all runs is allowed.
- Pulling offensive linemen is allowed, and all blocking rules apply.
- When engaging a block, the blocker must come to balance and all initial contact must be made with the hands.
- Landing on or piling on any player on the ground results in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.
- Blocking by initiating or leading with head, elbows, forearms, knees or shoulders – anything but the hands will result in a charging penalty.
- Blocking below the waist, cut blocks, clipping and any blindsides crack back blocks – by the offense or defense – are assessed appropriate penalties and result in an automatic ejection as determined by the game officials. A player who is blocked into a low block may continue to play in the game if the officials see extenuating circumstances.

### **Running**

- The QB is allowed to run for a pass beyond the line of scrimmage after a pitch or hand off.
- Immediate QB sneaks in the A gap are not allowed.
- The QB is free to scramble at any position on the field as long as the QB gets outside of the tackle box.

### **Downing the ball carrier**

- If playing 2 hand touch – the ball carrier is downed after being touched with two hands by one player on any part of the body – excluding the head and neck area.

### **Offensive Pre-snap alignment**

- The offensive team must have five (5) players on the line of scrimmage at the point of the snap – three linemen and one eligible receiver on each side of the field aligned on the ball.
- Both Tackles must line up within both players outstretched arms' reach of the center.
- Eligible receivers can be tight or split at the coach's decision.
- Unbalanced offensive LINE (interior linemen) formations are NOT allowed
- All motion and shift rules apply as outlined in the NCAA rule books.

### **Defensive Pre-snap alignment**

- The two defensive linemen must be aligned reasonably within the outstretched arms (to the side) of the furthest offensive lineman/tight end. For example, a defensive lineman can line up from the outside shoulder of the blocker but can not unreasonably line up extremely wide. If the DE were to stand with arms outstretched like a "T" he should be able to touch the OLs shoulder if on the same horizontal plane.
- The defensive team must have two players on the line of scrimmage (the DEs)
- One DE must be on each side of the center.
- Defensive ends may NOT line up in the A-gap, they can align head-up on the attached lineman (not the center), and slant inside.
- The protected A gap zone: extending laterally from the Center to the Inside half of the Tackles and extending 4 yards directly in front of the center, no defensive player may align in this protected A gap zone.
- Additional defensive players may align outside of the defensive ends on the line of scrimmage, but cannot line up on the line of scrimmage in the A-gaps.
- Linebackers MUST align a minimum of 4 yards from the line of scrimmage unless
  - Timing a blitz off the edge (if allowed per age group)
  - Pressing an eligible receiver/TE/W close to or attached to the LOS
  - If the ball is on or within 4 yards of the goal line, the LBs can be on the goal line and technically closer than 4 yards to the LOS.

### **First Downs**

- The offense has (3) plays to reach a 10-yard first down by run, pass or penalty. If in the red zone the offense will have 4 downs (explained further in next section).
- On a series beginning from or inside the defensive 10-yard line, the offense can only achieve a first down through penalty.
- Any penalty that results in a first down starts a new set of downs with a new line to gain.

### **Fourth downs**

- The offense gets 4 downs only in the RED ZONE (20 yard line and in)
- If the series STARTS WITHIN the red zone, the offense will get all 4 downs regardless of if the offense gets backed up outside of the red zone.
- For a series STARTING OUTSIDE the red zone that results in a 4<sup>th</sup> down being spotted within the red zone, the offense will get to use that 4<sup>th</sup> down.
  - Additionally, for a series STARTING OUTSIDE the red zone – if a team visits the red zone in its 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> down and is subsequently backed up outside the red zone, then the offense will still be able to use the 4<sup>th</sup> down to either score or gain a 1<sup>st</sup> down and goal. (upon gaining a 1<sup>st</sup> and goal after using a 4<sup>th</sup> down, the offense will still get use another 4<sup>th</sup> down)
- A turnover on downs will result the ball being placed at the 40 yard line.

### **The Red zone defined**

- The 20 yard line AND in is the red zone

### **Touchdowns and scores**

- Extra point tries are attempted following all touchdowns with one (1) point from the 3-yard line and two (2) points from the 5-yard line.
- The clock continues to run during extra points unless the touchdown comes in the final two minutes of the game with teams within a 12-point margin.
- If a touchdown is scored as time runs out in the first or second half, the conversion will still take place as an untimed down.

### **Scoring values:**

- Touchdown = 6 points
  - PAT= game official will ask if the scoring team will go for 1 or 2 extra points
- In the event of a penalty on an extra point, the offense cannot change its decision to go for 1 point or 2.
- In the event of an interception or a fumble caught on the fly during a point-after try, the ball is blown dead. There is no return for 2 points.

### **Safety**

- There are no safeties in the ½ field style of play

### **Ties / Overtime**

- To determine which team starts on offense or defense, each team's head coach will play one round of rock/paper/scissors, with the winner determining how they would like to start overtime play.
- Coaches have the choice to go for 1 from the 3 yd. line or 2 from the 5 yd. line.
- Regular season overtime is limited to two rounds with each team having an opportunity to score.
- There are no time outs, and none carry over from regulation.
- The QB a gap run rules apply
- The defense can return a turnover (turnover rules apply) for a touchdown (to the 40-yard line). However, if downed before scoring, the next series (if applicable) will begin as a normal OT series.
- For all overtimes beyond the first, teams simply alternate possession and remain on the same side of the field. (AB-BA)
- If there is still a tie at the end of the second round, the game will end in a tie. In postseason play, you repeat until a winner is determined

### **Rushing rule**

- There is no bull rushing. The blitzer/rusher must rush the inside or outside part of a blocker's body and is not allowed to rush through the centerline of the blocker.
- Blitzers/rusher cannot throw or purposefully push blocker into the ground or into the ball-carrier.

### **Blitzing 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and up**

- Blitzing is defined as any predetermined penetration by a linebacker or defensive back. Blitzers/rusher must use hands and feet to defeat the block to either side of the blocker.
- The defense cannot blitz the A gap from the line of scrimmage.
- Linebackers and defensive backs can blitz the A gap as long as they are a minimum of 4 yards behind the ball on the snap.
- These rules are judgment calls by the game official.
- The blitz mercy rule will go into effect if a team is ahead by 21 points or more

### **Blitz Mercy Rule**

- If a team is winning by 21 points or more, the "blitz mercy rule" goes into effect where the winning team can no longer blitz until the score is less than a 21 point spread.
- If a blitz occurs during the mercy rule period, the play is blown dead and the down is replayed.

### **Blitzing for K-2<sup>nd</sup>**

- -Blitzing is not allowed for the age group k-2<sup>nd</sup>
- DE's are considered RUSHERS not blitzers, any other player but the DEs would be considered a blitzer

### **Center**

- The center must snap the ball between his/her legs.
- The center can double-team block alongside another player but must initiate block with hands, and all blocking rules apply.

### **Jumping and spinning**

- Players may not jump or hurdle to avoid being downed.
- Players may not dive for the end zone or to gain additional yardage.
- Players may not attempt short yardage "over the pile" jumps. This is unnecessary roughness.
- Any player who jumps illegally and lands on another player will be flagged for unnecessary roughness.
- A player may dive in an attempt to catch a pass but is down upon reception.
- Quarterbacks can jump when throwing the ball.

### **Turnovers, Fumbles, dead balls and interceptions**

- All fumbles are considered dead balls as soon as the ball hits the ground
- Except for the following: "QB Scoop rule" – The QB has a chance to scoop the ball after a poor snap (rolled or hiked over head) AS LONG AS there is no defensive player in the immediate vicinity as the QB is fielding the ball while staying up. This is a judgment call by the referee to maintain SAFETY and keep players from diving on a DEAD ball.
  - No diving on the ball
  - ONLY the QB can pick it up the muffed snap

- QB run limitations remain in effect
- If the play is blown dead in order to maintain safety - the ball will move back to the LOS with a loss of down.
- A fumbled ball may be recovered in the air and advanced by either team.
- An interception can be advanced by the intercepting team.
- A player may not strip anyone of the ball. Anyone making intentional contact with the ball while it is being carried causing the ball to be fumbled will be called for stripping, a 5-yard penalty.

### **Ball spotting**

- Spotting the ball is at the game officials' judgment. It is up to the game officials to try and be near the spot whenever possible.
- Ball will be spotted where the ball is held when a player is downed.

### **A Gap**

- The A gap is the area between the center and the Tackles.
- Defenders on the line of scrimmage cannot line up directly over the center and may not immediately engage the center.
- The defense cannot blitz the A gap from the line of scrimmage.
- Linebackers and defensive backs can blitz the A gap as long as they are a minimum of three yards from the LOS on the snap.
- Defensive ends may NOT line up in the A-gap, they can align head-up on the attached lineman (not the center), and slant inside.
- There is a protected A gap zone: extending laterally from the Center to the Inside half of the Tackles and extending 3 yards directly in front of the center, no defensive player may align in this protected A gap zone.
- Attempts at a center sneak by the offense is penalized as an A gap violation. See A gap violation under penalties section.

### **PENALTIES**

- Any penalty or yardage lost that would result in the ball being backed up past the 40, the ball will then be spotted at the 40 regardless with a loss of down.
- If a loss of yardage occurs when the ball is AT THE 40 yard line, the line to gain/first down marker will be moved up to reflect the additional yardage.
- Because of the shorter field – all enforceable penalties of 15 yards will be enforced as 10 yards for the purpose of the game. (exceptions listed later)
- The team not committing the foul gets to choose between the result of the play or the enforcement of the penalty.
- If both teams commit fouls on the same play, they offset and the down is replayed.
- An odd number of fouls with more being assessed on one team will still offset and result in replay of down
- A live-ball foul on the offense is marked off from the spot of the penalty.
- A live-ball foul on the defense is marked off from the spot of the penalty, the original line of scrimmage or the end of the play, whichever benefits the offense the most.
- No penalty may move the ball past the 40 yard line.
- A half cannot end on a penalty that is accepted. If the penalty is accepted, it is marked off and a single untimed down is played. If the penalty is declined, the half is over.
- A first down will be determined after the ball is spotted at the end of a play and any applicable penalty yardage is assessed. Net yardage (forward progress plus/minus penalty yardage) must be sufficient to

be awarded a first down.

- EOP – End of Play
- LOS – Line of Scrimmage
- POI – Point of Infraction
  
- NOTE: All flagrant fouls carry with them automatic first downs or loss of downs in addition to the penalty yardage.
- Any penalties not covered below are to follow NCAA rules.

### **\*\*Flagrant fouls\*\***

- A player committing a flagrant foul – including an unsportsmanlike conduct, intentional tackling or unnecessary roughness penalty with malice – will receive a warning from the head game official and ejected upon a second flagrant foul. If the first act is determined to be severe, the head game official has the option to eject the player without the warning.
- All flagrant fouls that do not result in an ejection will be accompanied by a substitution from the field for at least one play to allow the coaches to address the situation and calm down any tempers.
- It is recommended that the league track players who commit flagrant fouls on a per game basis. The head game official will mark down on paper the guilty player (by name, number and/or team) and will turn in the information to the league director, commissioner or appropriate staff member.
- The head game official's decision on flagrant fouls are final.
- The safety of all players is the primary concern of the league. Game officials shall call unnecessary roughness when any player uses excessive force or violence during a play – even if the play is technically within the rules.

### **\*Intentional Tackling (flagrant foul)**

Defense – 15 yards.

- If deemed excessive or with intent to hurt an opposing player, referees may eject the offending player.
- Intentional tackling defined: Intentionally wrapping up to stop forward progress while taking the ball-carrier to the ground; shoulder checking/hit with the intent of knocking the ball-carrier to the ground. It is the game officials' discretion on any other attempt to use excessive force by a player to initiate a tackle.
- An automatic touchdown will be given to the team if a player is running and judged to be free with no defenders between him/her and the end zone and is deliberately tackled, tripped or restrained by clothing grab by a pursuing player or by an individual associated with the defensive team who comes onto the field.

### **\*Unnecessary Roughness – flagrant foul**

Offense 10 yards, loss of down

Defense – 10 yards, automatic first down.

- The safety of all players is the primary concern. Game officials shall call unnecessary roughness when any player uses excessive force or violence during a play, even if the play is technically within the rules.
- All players are expected to play “in control” at all times. Players are in violation of the unnecessary roughness rule when they risk injury to themselves or to other players because of unsafe or out-of-control conduct on the field.
- Examples include but are not limited to: head butting, head slapping, throwing elbows or forearms and intentionally hitting, kicking, or tripping other players. It is the game officials' discretion on whether these fouls elevate to flagrant fouls. Repeated or flagrant violations may result in the player being ejected from

the game.

- A player may never lead with his or her head or initiate contact to the head.
- Unnecessary and overly violent contact that includes charging, bull rushing, and purposefully shoving a player to the ground will be considered unnecessary roughness.

\* **Charging (offense)- unnecessary roughness – flagrant foul**

10 yards, loss of down

- When a ball-carrier intentionally runs into a defender, lowers his/her shoulder or makes unnecessary contact with defender in an attempt to cause bodily harm.
- When an offensive player intentionally runs through or over a defensive player with a running start.
- When an offensive player intentionally engages a block with his shoulder with no attempt to come to balance and initiate the block first with open hands.

\* **Bull rushing (defense) - unnecessary roughness – flagrant foul**

10 yards - automatic first down

- When a defender intentionally uses his/her momentum or excessive force to bull rush through the centerline of an offensive player. Defender must make the appropriate effort to go around or to a leveraged side of the blocker.

\* **Ejection**

Any two (2) flagrant foul infractions by an individual player in one game or multiple single infractions across several games may result in further action, including suspension from future games or ejection from the league, subject to the league's discretion.

- The ejection process will also apply to coaches and any parents/spectators on the field or in the stands who encourage players to act in an unsportsmanlike manner.
- Any player who strikes another player or is involved in a fight will be immediately ejected from the game and be suspended indefinitely pending a ruling from the league president.
- Before a player can be ejected from a game, all game officials must confer and unanimously agree. NOTE: Only the head coach or coach on the field may speak to the game officials. If a player or coach contests a call or says anything to a game official that the head game official feels is inappropriate, an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty will be called. The game officials are empowered to eject any coach if the foul is deemed excessive.
- If a coach is ejected, the individual cannot enter the field of play for the rest of the game. The individual may be required to leave the premises if he or she becomes disruptive.
- Depending on the situation, the on-field staff has full discretion to take up the chain of command and may request for the LD/commissioner/president or higher-level staff member to be involved.

**Roughing the passer**

Defense – 10 yards

Defenders may raise arms while rushing the passer, so long as no contact is made with the passer – the only contact that is allowed would be an attempt to down the ball carrier (the QB) by a 2 hand touch below the neck but NOT to the QB's throwing arm. Excessive contact with passer before, during or after throwing the ball including but not limited to:

- Running into the QB
- Making contact with the passer's head and/or shoulders/throwing arm
- Pushing the passer to the ground

### **Illegal QB run or scramble**

Offense – ball returns to original spot. Loss of down.

- The QB is allowed to run for a pass beyond the line of scrimmage after a pitch or hand off.
- Immediate QB sneaks in the A gap are not allowed.
- The QB can not scramble and run beyond the line of scrimmage when in the Red Zone
- The QB can not run beyond the line of scrimmage within the tackle box
  - In order for it to be a legal scramble beyond the LOS, the QB must move laterally and get outside the tackle box (even if forced up into the A gap by the DEs)
  - Once outside the original tackle box, the QB can advance the ball as long as the spot of the ball was outside the red zone.
- During the course of a scramble, the QB can not cross the 50 yard line – the play will be blown dead.

### **Unsportsmanlike conduct**

Offense / Defense - 10 yards

All players, head, and assistant coaches are expected to follow the codes of conduct. Unsportsmanlike conduct includes but is not limited to:

- Verbal abuse, profanity, taunting.
- Constant or repeated audible criticism of the game officials.

Game officials can eject any player, coach or spectator who violates this rule repeatedly or egregiously.

### **Pass interference**

Enforced as 10 yards

### **Taunting**

If occurring on touchdown, a 10-yard penalty will be assessed on the extra point try. If occurring in the field a play, a 10-yard penalty will be enforced.

Defense / Offense – 10 yards.

- Any flagrant acts or remarks that deride, mock or bait an opponent are considered taunting.
- Celebration, whether communal or individual, is allowed as long as it does not fall under “Taunting” definition.

### **Illegal blocking**

Offense – 10 yards & loss of down

- Severity could result in an unnecessary roughness and/or a flagrant foul.
- Landing or piling on a defender/player on the ground, chip blocking, elbowing and knee blocking.
- Blocking by initiating or leading with elbows, forearms or shoulders - severity may result in a charging penalty or flagrant foul/unnecessary roughness.
- A crack back or any block on a defenseless defender falls under unnecessary roughness and can result in ejection if determined as intentional.

### **Delay of game**

5 yards

- In addition to the offense not snapping the ball within the 30 second play clock, this can include:
- Too many players on the field, not wearing required equipment during a play.
- Defense delays or hinders the offense from making the next snap.

### **Illegal formation**

Offense / Defense - 5 yards

- Fewer than five players on the line of scrimmage for offense. These five players must be contiguous with the center. There must be one player on each side of the center (within both players arm's length of the center) and one eligible receiver on each side of the center.
- Fewer than two players on the line of scrimmage for the defense.
- Showing blitz directly over the center or aligning any defensive player directly over the center on the LOS.
- Unbalanced LINES are not allowed – a Tackle must be on each side of the center.
- A Tight End can align next to a Tackle as long as there is no eligible receiver “covering” him up.
- Unbalanced receiver formations are allowed (3x2, 3x1).

### **Offside / False Start**

Offense / Defense – 5 yards

- If a defensive player enters the neutral zone before an offensive player commits a false start, the penalty is on the defense, even if no contact is made.
- This rule encompasses encroachment, false start, neutral zone infraction and off sides.

### **Diving**

Offense – 5 yards from the spot of foul

- Diving forward in an attempt to gain yardage or advance the ball.
- Diving into the end zone or for a first down.
- Note: A player is allowed to dive to catch the ball or down a ball carrier with a 2 hand touch, as long as the touch is not overly physical in nature.

### **A-gap violation**

Defense or offense – Live ball foul only. 5 yards from LOS, replay down

- Any non defensive linemen who makes LOS penetration immediately in the A-gap.
- Any defensive player who lines up in the protected A gap zone: extending laterally from the Center to the Inside half of the Tackles and extending 3 yards directly in front of the center, no defensive player may align in this protected A gap zone.
- A blitz into the A-Gap is allowed if the non defensive lineman blitzes from at least 3 yards depth.
- Any intentional illegal handoff to an ineligible receiver (offensive lineman).
- Any QB sneak in the A-gap from under center.

Site Director and Coaches Questions – Please contact [Brandon@nationalflexfootball.com](mailto:Brandon@nationalflexfootball.com)

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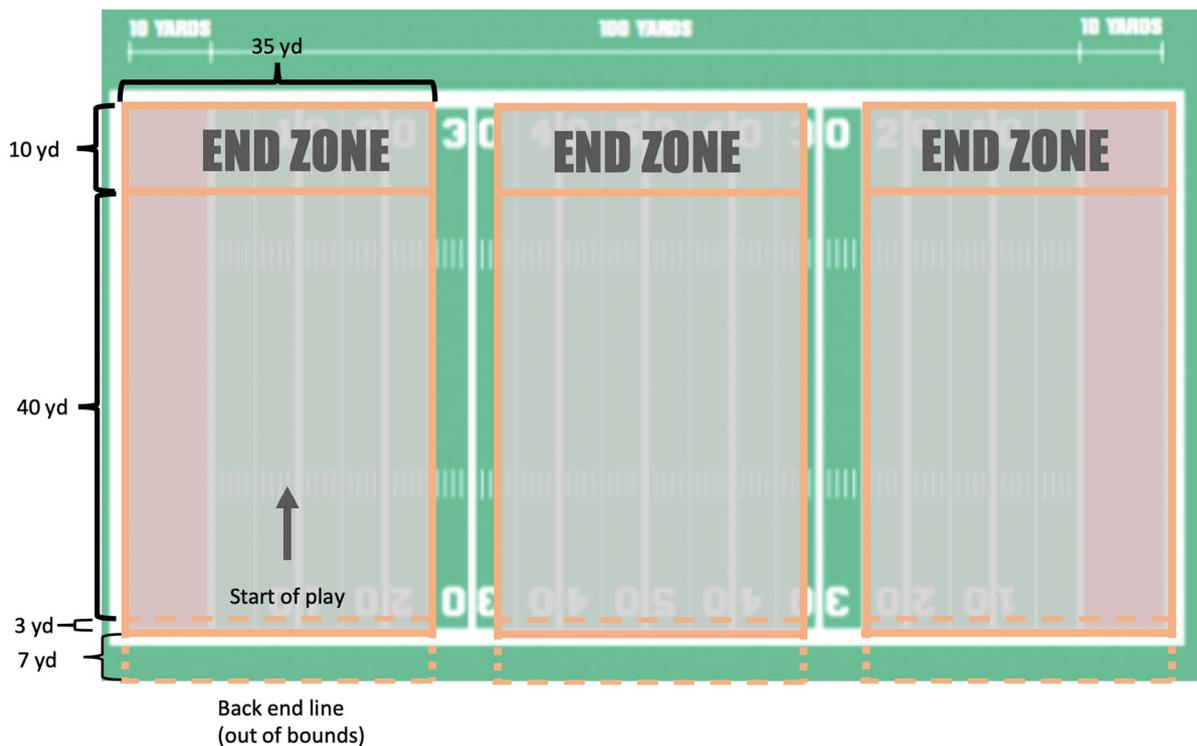


# Illustrations

## Flex Multiple Field Setup

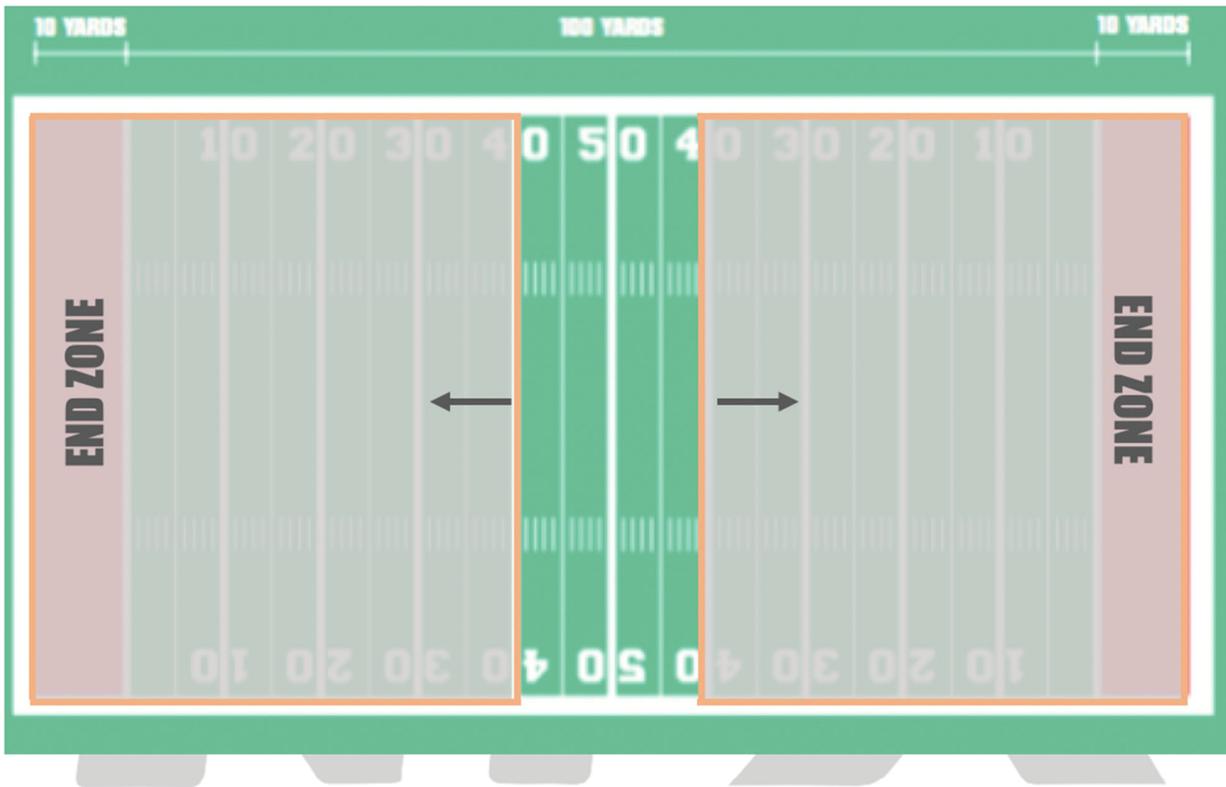
This set up is generally for younger age groups. Game play is ran from one sideline to the other sideline on a traditional field with only one of those side lines being the end zone (see illustration below)

- Direction of play is towards the sideline you choose as the single end zone
- The field is 35 yards wide by 53 1/3 yards long (width of a traditional field) with a 10-yard end zone
- Pylons will mark the end zones. Lining the end zone is preferred.
- A minimum of 10 yards serving as a buffer between fields is recommended for safety purposes.
- From the start of play line, a distance of 10 yards is extended to the back to be the back end line (the QB or ball carrier can not go behind this line)
- The start of play line is 40 yards from the goal line.



**Flex 1/2 Field Setup**

- The standard football field is divided in half with the direction of play going from the mid field out towards the end zone.
- 2 Flex Football games are to be run at the same going in opposing directions towards the end zones on their respective field.



## QB runs within the Tackle Box

The following illustrates the QB running path that is not allowed (in red) and the allowed QB running path that takes the QB out of the tackle box. Remember, the QB is allowed to run as long as he is outside of the Red Zone (11 yard line to the 40 yard line)

