



Maple Grove Youth Football Association Spring Flag Football

Referee Rules Quick Reference Guide

1 Field Specifications and Game-Specific Rules

- 1.1 Games will be played 5v5 – 4 Flag Fields per Full Sized Football Field
- 1.2 The field size will be 40 yards long with a 10-yard end zones. The field width will be half the width of the full-sized field. If the fields aren't lined, referees will use their best judgement on sideline plays.
- 1.3 A coin toss/rock, paper, scissors will determine which team takes first possession of the ball.
- 1.4 There are no kickoffs. Play will start at the 5 yard line at the beginning of each half and following a TD.
- 1.5 There are no safeties. If stopped in the endzone, the ball will be re-spotted at the goal line.
- 1.6 A first down is made when a team passes the mid-field (20-yard line) first down zone (if a play starts ahead of the first down zone and loses yardage behind the first down zone, a first down will not be issued if the team re-crosses that line).
- 1.7 Punt - If a team does not cross midfield in 3 downs to gain a first down it has two options for 4th down.
 - 1.7.1 If the offense goes for it, they must cross the midfield first down or score a TD. If they are unsuccessful, the Defense will take over the ball at the point of the failed conversion.
 - 1.7.2 "Punt" - The opposing team will take the ball at their 5-yard line. There is no punt option allowed once midfield is crossed.
- 1.8 There will be a 45-second play clock. Coaches are encouraged to run as many plays as possible.
- 1.9 Scoring
 - 1.9.1 Touchdowns are 6 points – teams will then choose an option for the conversion:
 - 1.9.1.1 1-Point Conversion from the 5. This is a “NO RUN” zone in the Gold, Junior Varsity, and Varsity Divisions (See 2.1.5).
 - 1.9.1.2 2-Point Conversion from the 10 – Run or Pass
 - 1.9.1.3 A turnover on an extra point will result in a failed attempt and the play will be called dead.
- 1.10 Timekeeping
 - 1.10.1 Games will consist of two 25-minute running time halves with a two-minute half-time.
 - 1.10.2 Each team will receive two 60-second timeouts per half, timeouts do not carry over.
 - 1.10.3 Games can end in a tie - there is no overtime.
- 1.11 Playing Time - Every player will play at least 50% of the plays each game, and coaches should ensure that everyone receives equal playing time. THERE ARE NOT MANDATORY ROTATION RULES. Coaches are encouraged to sub during changes of possessions to keep play moving.

2 Offense

- 2.1 General Offense
 - 2.1.1 No intentional contact – Blocking is illegal.
 - 2.1.2 Quarterbacks can not advance the ball directly after receiving a snap. They can advance the ball with a return handoff or by receiving a pass.
 - 2.1.3 The ball must be snapped between the center's legs. Shotgun snaps are allowed.
 - 2.1.4 Only one player is allowed in motion at a time but may not move toward the LOS until the snap.

2.1.5 **“No Run Zones”** are designed to avoid short-yardage situations, and are **only enforced in the Gold, Junior Varsity, and Varsity Divisions.**

2.1.5.1 “No Run Zones” come into effect only when the offensive team is within 5 yards of a first down or the end zone. Exception: If the offensive team has already achieved a first down but has been pushed back into the midfield “No Run Zone”, then the “No Run Zone” is not in effect.

2.1.5.2 **THE REFEREE WILL NOTIFY BOTH TEAMS WHEN THE BALL IS SPOTTED IN A NO RUN ZONE**

2.1.5.3 If a run play occurs while inside the “No Run Zone”, the play is immediately dead and placed at the original LOS with a Loss of a Down.

2.2 Passing Game

2.2.1 Any player on the field can pass the ball provided the ball has not crossed the line of scrimmage.

2.2.2 All passes must cross the LOS. No passes are allowed to be received behind the LOS

2.2.3 QB has a seven (7) second “pass clock”, if the pass is not thrown within seven seconds, the play is ruled dead, spotted at the previous LOS and a loss of down.

2.2.4 Shovel passes are allowed but must be received BEYOND the line of scrimmage.

2.3 Receiving Game

2.3.1 All players are eligible to receive passes.

2.3.2 A player must have a foot or other body part land inbounds first for a legal reception.

2.4 Running Game

2.4.1 Any player on the field can receive a handoff – but all handoffs must occur behind the LOS

2.4.1.1 Only “direct” handoffs are legal in the Crimson and Gold Divisions.

2.4.1.2 Pitches and tosses are allowed in the Junior Varsity and Varsity Divisions.

3 Defense

3.1 General Defense

3.1.1 NO INTENTIONAL CONTACT of any kind is permitted.

3.1.2 Crossing the LOS - Defensive players cannot cross the LOS until the ball is handed off.

3.1.2.1 **JV AND VARSITY DIVISIONS ONLY** – Players are able to cross the LOS at any time if they are at least 7 yards behind the LOS at the snap of the ball.

- The Referee will position himself at 7 yards from the LOS in the defensive backfield – any defensive players in front of him during the snap are ineligible to rush the passer and can only cross the LOS if there is a handoff.

- There is no limit to the number of rushers a team can send

3.2 Turnovers

3.2.1 Interceptions can be returned except on TD Conversions (see 1.9.1.3)

3.2.2 No turnovers resulting from fumbles. The ball is dead and placed at the spot of the fumble.

4 Spotting of the Ball

4.1 Spotting the Ball. The ball will be spotted:

4.1.1 Where the flag was removed by the defense

4.1.2 Where the ball carrier goes out of bounds or goes to the ground, or where the ball is fumbled.

4.1.3 Should a ball carrier's flag fall off during play, the ball is spotted at the spot the flag dropped.

4.1.4 If a receiver's flag inadvertently falls off before a pass is caught, the player is considered down at the spot of the reception.

4.1.5 If the ball is fumbled after the QB/C exchange and the player loses control of the ball at any time, the play is called dead. (See 3.2)

4.1.5.1 Snaps that touch the turf that are picked up immediately and cleanly can continue, this is at the referee's discretion. If the ball is bobbled or kicked while it is on the

ground, picked up by another player who was not the intended QB, or picked up while the QB's knee is down, the play should be called dead.

5 Penalties

5.1 Offensive Penalties

5.1.1 5 Yard Penalties from LOS and Replay the Down (Pre-Snap):

- 5.1.1.1 False Start/Illegal Motion
- 5.1.1.2 Illegal Formation/Too Many Men
- 5.1.1.3 Delay of Game - 45 Seconds between plays

5.1.2 5 Yard Penalties from Spot of Foul and Loss of Down (Post-Snap):

- 5.1.2.1 Flag Guarding – if the location of the spot foul would have given the Offense a first down, it will be first down. If the penalty moves them behind the midfield first down marker, the team is not eligible for a first down when it crosses again.

5.1.3 5 Yard Penalties from LOS and Loss of Down (Post-Snap)

- 5.1.3.1 Intentional Contact - (blocking, charging, tripping, pushing, holding, obstructing, stiff-arming) – excluding intentional contact to the head or face, which is an automatic unsportsmanlike conduct penalty (Section 5.1.4.1).

5.1.4 10 Yard Penalties from LOS and Loss of Down

- 5.1.4.1 Unsportsmanlike Conduct (See Definition in Section 8.4), including any intentional contact to the head or face area of an opponent or any contact deemed to have an intent to injure

5.2 Defensive Penalties

5.2.1 5 Yard Penalties - No Automatic First Down (Pre-Snap):

- 5.2.1.1 Offsides
- 5.2.1.2 Illegal Formation/Too Many Men

5.2.2 5-Yard Penalties - Automatic First Down (Post-Snap):

- 5.2.2.1 Illegal Rush - Crossing the LOS before the ball is handed off (Except a legal rush in JV/Varsity from 7 yards beyond the LOS)
- 5.2.2.2 Intentional Contact - (blocking, charging, tripping, pushing, holding, obstructing, stiff-arming) – excluding intentional contact to the head or face, which is an automatic unsportsmanlike conduct penalty (Section 5.2.3.1)

5.2.3 10 Yard Penalties and Automatic First Down

- 5.2.3.1 Unsportsmanlike Conduct (See Definition in Section 8.4), including any intentional contact to the head or face area of an opponent or any contact deemed to have an intent to injure

5.3 Unsportsmanlike Conduct (USLC) Definitions

- 5.3.1 USLC Illegal Contact - Any intentional contact to the head or face is an automatic USLC Penalty. This may not lead to an immediate disqualification unless Rule 5.3.2 applies.
- 5.3.2 Any intentional contact that is deemed by the officials to have an intent to injure shall be an USLC penalty and will result in immediate disqualification.
- 5.3.3 No player or coach shall act in an unsportsmanlike manner once the officials assume authority for the contest. Examples are, but not limited to: players or coaches arguing with an official about a decision; using any type of profanity directing insults or disrespectful language or gestures towards opponents, coaches, officials or fans; refusing to comply with an official's request.
- 5.3.4 Any player receiving an Unsportsmanlike Conduct Penalty will need to be removed from the game for a minimum period of at least five (5) consecutive plays. Coaches are encouraged to discuss the situation with them during this time.
- 5.3.5 If any Player receives a second USLC during a game, they will be disqualified from the remainder of that game and a meeting with the player, a parent/guardian and a Board Member will need to occur before they are able to resume play the following week.
- 5.3.6 Any coach who receives an USLC penalty is subject to review from the MGYFA Board.

RULES DIFFERENCES BETWEEN DIVISIONS

CRIMSON

GOLD

JV/VARISTY

OFFENSE

NO RUN ZONE	None	<p>“No Run Zones” come into effect only when the offensive team is within 5 yards of a first down or the end zone. Exception: If the offensive team has already achieved a first down but has been pushed back into a “No Run Zone”, then the “No Run Zone” is no longer in effect.</p> <p>THE REFEREE WILL NOTIFY BOTH TEAMS WHEN THE BALL IS SPOTTED IF THEY ARE IN A NO RUN ZONE.</p>
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TOSSES AND PITCHES	Not Allowed - Direct Handoffs Only	Allowed
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DEFENSE

RUSHING THE QB	Not Allowed - Must wait for ball to be handed off to cross LOS or outside of tackle box	The rush marker will be designated by the referee standing seven yards from the line of scrimmage.
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