

MFL Flag Rules

8 Man Ball

- Game time is Forfeit time! The winning team of a forfeited game will receive fourteen point differential of that game. Teams with less than the required number of participants at the scheduled start time will forfeit the game.
- The officiating will be done by officials who are in absolute control of the game.
- Teams / Coaches are responsible for keeping their spectators under control. Misconduct of spectators, players, coaches can result in assessment of a penalty, ejection, or forfeiture of the game. Spectators must remain in the area designated by the officials.
- The official and or supervisor have the power to make decisions on any matters or questions not specifically in the rules.

1. Team Requirements

- A team will consist of at least 10 players and must not have more than 8 players on the field at any given time.
- The offensive team must have any 4 players on the line of scrimmage at the time of the snap.
- Substitutions are allowed between plays and during time outs.
- All players must be recorded on the roster, have a mouthpiece that is properly fitted, and are wearing a flag set properly, before they are allowed to play.
- The designated team area is located between the 20 yard lines, 2 yard off the sideline adjacent to the Cheerleading Box (which will occupy the opposite 20 yards of the 50 yard marker). This area is for all the players and assistant coach.
- The spectator area is designated as 5 yards from the sideline. Spectators are not allowed in the team area.

2. Equipment and Facilities

- All players must wear shoes. Rubber cleated shoes are allowed. Open toe, open heal, or hard soles are not allowed. No metal cleats.
- All players must wear an MFL approved mouthpiece during games AT ALL TIMES. No exceptions.
- Pants or shorts with pockets and or belt loops are strictly prohibited. A player may not turn his/her pants/shorts inside out and tape his/her pockets in order to play.
- Towels may not hang from a participant's waist or otherwise interfere with the removal of a flag.
- Covering flags: A team will get 2 warnings, then a 10 yard penalty will be assessed. (No warnings will be given)
- Jerseys must be tucked inside the pants and the flag set must be properly worn in such a way that the flag "floats" away from the hips. A team will get 2 warnings and a 10 yard / loss of down will be assessed (no warnings will be given). Consistent violations from a single player may result in sidelining that player for the game.
- All flag belts must be worn properly. Flag must "float" away from the hip (the 45 degree must angle down and away from the hip). Excess belts must not dangle near the flags. Flags must be at hip level and on the sides of the player. A player will only get 1 warning, then a 5 yard penalty will be assessed. Excessive violations may result in sidelining that player for the game.
- Only junior sized footballs are permitted on the game field and during practice.
- Teams must use flags provided by MFL Football League. All team members must wear the same colored jersey. Jerseys must be tucked in the pants at all times and must not cover any part of the flag belt. Shirts

may not have pockets and may not be tied in knots. No hooded sweatshirts. If wearing a hooded sweatshirt this will result in an illegal equipment penalty of 10 yards.

3. Start of the Game & Timing

- Coin toss will be conducted 3 minutes before the start of each game. Coaches will choose 2 captains from their team and referees will conduct a captain's meeting on the 50 yard line. The captain winning the coin toss will have a choice of options for the first half or they must state that they shall defer his/her option to the second half:
 - To choose whether his or her team will start on offense or defense.
 - To choose the goal his or her team will defend.** The captain not having the first choice of options for a half, shall exercise the remaining option**
- One timeout per half is allowed per team.
- The ball must be put into play no more than 30 seconds after the referee has placed the ball at the line of scrimmage.
- Games will consist of two 20 minute halves with a 10 minute halftime. Timing will be continuous for the first half and the first 18 minutes of the second half. Only team and official timeouts will stop the clock. Approximately 2 minutes before the end of the second half the referee shall stop the clock and inform both teams of the time left on the clock. The clock will restart on the snap.
- Mercy Rule:
 - If a team is leading by 6 or more touchdowns at halftime, or by 3 touchdowns by the final 2 minutes of the game, the mercy rule will be put into effect and the game will be over.
- 2-Minute warning:
 - During the final two minutes of the second half the clock will stop for a:
 1. Incomplete legal or incomplete illegal forward pass – clock starts on the snap.
 2. Out of bounds – clock starts on the snap.
 3. Team or official timeout – clock starts on the snap.
 4. First down transition – clock starts on the snap.
 5. Touchdown transition – clock starts on the snap.
 6. Team attempting to conserve time illegally – clock starts at the ready.
 7. Inadvertent whistle – clock starts at the ready.
- Injured player on the field. While there is a player that is injured on the field, all players on the game field must take a knee immediately to allow officials and coaches (and possibly parents) access to the injured player. Penalty will be unsportsmanlike conduct w/ a 10 yard loss.

4. Game Rules

- Field dimensions are 80 yards by 40 yards with 5 yard end zones and yard markers in 5 yard intervals.
- The ball will be placed at the 5 yard marker after every touchdown and at every turnover.
- A team will have 4 consecutive plays or downs to reach the half way marker to gain a first down, and if successful, will have an additional 4 plays or downs to reach the end zone.
- Penalties will not recede past the 5 yard marker line and will result in a loss of down.
- The zone line to gain in any series shall be the zone in advance of the ball, unless the distance has been lost due to penalty or failure to gain.
- A new series of downs will be awarded when a team moves the ball into the next zone.
- Flag removal:

- When a flag is removed from the player currently carrying the ball, the down shall end and the ball declared dead. The spot of the ball is determined at the point there the flag leaves the belt and not where the ball lands on the ground.
- If a flag inadvertently falls off, a one hand tag between the shoulders and the knees constitutes a capture.
- A player may leave their feet to remove a flag.
- The ball becomes dead when:
 - A legal deflagging occurs.
 - The ball carrier touches the ground with any part of their body other than the hands or feet.
 - A fumble hits the ground.
 - A snap from the center hits the ground – Officials discretion on the call.
- Each member of the offensive team is eligible to receive a pass unless the player goes out of bounds during the play.
- The center, after assuming the position of the snap and adjusting the ball, may not move nor change the position of the ball simulating the beginning of the play. The ball must be snapped in one continuous motion from the spot designated by the official and or ball marker. The ball may be moved with approval by the official due to poor field conditions.
- Before the snap, all offensive players must come to a complete stop for at least 1 second. Only one offensive player may be in motion and may not be moving towards the direction of the opponent's goal line at the time of the snap. If two or more players are in motion before the snap, it is considered a shift and all players must come set for one full second prior to the snap.
- For a legal catch, a pass receiver must come down with at least one foot in bounds.
- No defensive players will be allowed to line up directly on the center.
- No offensive player will be allowed to run the ball between the center and guard on either side.
- Rushing:
 - 5 seconds will be given to the offense before the defense can rush the quarterback (counted by the referee) FOR PASS PLAYS ONLY. This applies to the pocket only. If the quarterback attempts to roll out of the pocket there are no time restrictions as the quarterback may be running with the ball.
- Fumbles:
 - Fumbles are dead when the ball touches the ground.
 - The ball is put into play at the point where the ball first touches the ground.
 - Any passed or fumbled ball that does not touch the ground may be advanced by any player on the offensive team catching the ball.
 - Fumbles are considered a dead ball and the team in possession of the ball before the fumble will retain possession but the fumble will result in a loss of down.
- The ball is placed at the 5 yard line after a touchdown or possession turnover, opposite of the defended goal line.
- Touchdowns are worth 6 points.
- Extra Point attempt – The ball will be placed at the 10 yard line and will be worth 2 points.
- Tie score at the end of regulation during the playoffs – The field captains shall be brought together and a coin toss will be conducted. During the regular season, no overtime shall be played. During the playoffs the overtime format will be repeated until a winner is declared. No extra point attempt will be made during overtime. First touchdown wins the game.
- Interceptions:
 - The intercepting team will assume possession of the ball where it was caught and first down will start at the same spot.
- A touchdown (6 points) is achieved when a player has legal possession of the ball and crosses the line into the opposing team's end zone.

- An extra point (2 points) is achieved when a player has legal possession of the ball and crosses the line into the opposing team's end zone.

5. Summary of Penalties

- **Loss of 5 yards:**
 1. Required equipment worn illegally.
 2. Delay of game.
 3. Illegal snap.
 4. False start.
 5. Encroachment/offsidess.
 6. Illegal procedure.
 7. Illegal forward pass (5 yards from the point of pass and loss of down).
 8. Intentional grounding (5 yards from the point of pass and loss of down).
 9. Helping the runner: The runner shall not grasp, push, or pull a player to prevent a flag capture.
 10. A player on the field without the required equipment (flags or mouthpiece)
- **Loss of 10 yards:**
 1. Delaying the start of either half.
 2. Two or more consecutive encroachments during the same interval between downs. The initial encroachment is 5 yards.
 3. Illegal participation.
 4. Defensive pass interference. (Automatic replay of down) Consecutive interference will result in 10 yard penalty.
 5. Illegally secured flag on touchdown (revoke touchdown and loss of down).
 6. Unsportsmanlike conduct (applies to players, team spectators, and coaches).
 7. Spiking the ball or not returning the ball to the official after the ball is dead.
 8. Attempt to steal the ball from the ball carrier. 2nd offense is unsportsmanlike conduct.
 9. Unnecessary contact of any sort (tackling, tripping, pushing, or hitting will not be tolerated).
 10. Guarding the flag (holding flags or prevention of flag capture of any kind).
 11. Flagrant unsportsmanlike conduct (ejection from the game and may result in suspension – League Administration discretion).
 12. Flagrant personal fouls (ejection from the game and may result in suspension – League Administration discretion).
 13. Intentional tampering with the flag belt (player may be sidelined – official discretion on call)
 14. Roughing the passer.
 15. Illegal equipment.
 16. Illegal use of hands.

6. Clarification

- A defensive player may not remove the flag of an offensive player that does not have the ball. Similarly, the defensive player may not remove the quarterback's flag after the ball is thrown or handed off to another offensive player.
- A defensive player may not remove an offensive player's flag prior to the receiver touching the ball. Penalty – 10 yards.

- A defensive player must avoid running into the quarterback behind the line of scrimmage. If a defender contacts the passer's hand or arm, whether or not he or she touches the ball, is roughing the passer. Penalty – 10 yards.
- A player must not fasten his or her flags to their uniform or person. Flags must be worn properly; 45 degree popper must be pointed down and away from the sides of the hips. Coaches are responsible for checking their player's flags. Illegal equipment will result in a warning and could result in a 10 yard penalty, a player being sidelined, or suspension from the game.
- Pushing or pulling a receiver or defensive player is not allowed. Illegal use of hands – 10 yard penalty.
- An offensive player may not guard their flag, or bat players away from grabbing their flags at any time.
- When an inadvertent whistle is blown by an official, the ball is dead at the point when the whistle is blown. The team against which the inadvertent whistle was blown has the option of accepting the play or replaying the down.
- All players must wear flags. Failure to do so will result in a 5 yard penalty, if noticed prior to the snap of the ball. If noticed after the ball is in play, then the player without a flag belt must be touched with one hand between the shoulders and knees (after the ball has been snapped a penalty cannot be assessed).
- Spiking/kneeling the ball will be considered unsportsmanlike conduct – 10 yard penalty and the touchdown will be nullified.
- The 30 second clock begins when the official signals "Ready for Play".