



OFFICIAL RULES

Updated 2025

GENERAL

1. PIAA rules in effect, except as noted below.
2. Each player must have at least one starting position (offense or defense). If violations are occurring, it will be addressed by officials. All players must play either offense or defense the entire game – we are trying to give all players an opportunity to play, contribute, learn, and hopefully develop a love of football.
 - a. Players cannot substitute in / out during drive except due to injury
 - b. Players that are not 'going both ways' and only offense or defense, must play all the plays each half on the side they are playing – it is ok to switch those players at halftime, but not flip flop during the half
 - c. Example: Tommy 8YO starts on O and does not play D. He must play all offensive snaps in H1. In H2 he has the ability to switch to D, but then must play all defensive snaps in H2 and all overtimes, if he stays on O, then he plays all H2 and OT offensive plays. Tommy does NOT have to play any Special Teams.
3. All coaches must have an offensive playbook in the huddle. This will demonstrate organization, and speed up play.
4. One Coach is allowed on the field at all times (except during timeouts). If more than one coach is coaching on the field, a warning will be given with the next offense being a 15-yard penalty
5. Each game will consist of four 10-minute quarters of a running clock, with a 5 minute halftime.
 - a. Except as noted below, the clock only stops for time-outs, injuries, when a TD is scored and the ball is spotted for a PAT, and between PAT and Kickoff.
 - b. In the last 2 minutes of the game the clock will stop on scores / PAT, timeouts, change of possession, out of bounds, and incomplete passes.
 - c. Each team will have 3 timeouts per half.
 - d. There will be a 2nd Half "Two-Minute Warning" stop clock.
 - e. A running clock in the 2nd half will occur when one team has a 18 point lead or more and revert back to normal clock rules if the score differential reaches 9 or less.
6. First downs will occur when an offensive team crosses the nearest 15-yard cone in 4 plays or less.
7. Each offensive team has 30 seconds to call and snap an offensive play after the ball has been spotted.
8. All players must wear HYFFL-issued uniforms including socks. All shirts must be tucked into shorts. No hats or jewelry.
9. If a team has 8 or less players, the game will be forfeited, however, an 8 on 8 game will be played for fun.

SPORTSMANSHIP

10. Coaches should always set the example for the kids by always demonstrating 'sportsmanlike behavior,' minimizing interaction with the referees, and not questioning judgement calls. Arguments, questioning judgement, unsportsmanlike- or disrespectful behavior or language will result in an *immediate* 15Y penalty. The referees will set the tone – this is your warning.
11. Brief questions on clarifications of rules are OK, but should be minimized – Coaches should know the rules.
12. Players should not question the referees – communication should come through coaches.
13. Any player or coach ejected from game must leave field immediately and sit out the next game.

SCORING

14. Touchdown (6 pts)
15. Safety (2 pts)
16. PAT from 15 yard line (3 pts) – only if trailing by 9 or more
17. PAT from 5 yard line (2 pts)
18. PAT from 2.5 yard line (1 pt)
19. Return of a turnover on a 2 pt or 1 pt PAT for the same amount of points



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OVERTIME

20. After a coin flip to determine who get first possession, each team will have a series from the 10-yard line. If there is a score, the team will try for 1 or 2 points.
21. If the game is still tied, both teams will have a series from the 5-yard line. If there is a score, the team will try for 1 or 2 points.
22. Subsequently, if the game remains tied, the game will end in a tie, unless a playoff game both teams where both teams will have a series from the 5-yard line until tie is broken.

SPECIAL TEAMS

23. Kicking:
 - a. A kickoff is kicked from the 30 yard-line, and is not a live ball until it travels 15 yards.
 - i. If it is touched by the kicking team, the ball is down and possession goes to the receiving team.
 - ii. If it is fielded by the receiving team, they may advance it.
 - b. The ball is dead when touched by kicking team on ground, a pulled flag, a muff by the receiving team or ball goes out of bounds.
 - c. If the ball is kicked out of bounds, the receiving team has the option to take a 5 yard penalty and re-kick, or take possession where the ball went out, plus a 5 yard penalty.
 - d. If the kicking team touches the ball after travelling 15 yards, and prior to it being touched by the receiving team, possession goes to the kicking team.
24. Punts: A punt must be declared by the coach to the head official prior to the snap. No fake punts or rushing of punts. Punts must be attempted from a shotgun snap of at least 3 yards. Must be punted in an open spot on the line. Players cannot cross line of scrimmage until ball is punted. There is no defensive rush on a punt. The punt must be kicked before the 30 second play clock expires.
25. Field Goals, drop kicks, quick kicks or any other type of kicks are not permitted.

OFFENSE / DEFENSE / GENERAL GAME PLAY

26. All offensive players are eligible receivers.
27. Offensive blockers are not allowed to extend their arms on blocks. Hands must be tight to chest (there must be contact for this to be a penalty of 15 yards).
28. A ball carrier is down when his flag is pulled, goes out of bounds, flag-guards, spins (unforced), jumps, knee makes contact with the ground, or when the runner fumbles the ball and it hits the ground.
29. The defensive player must always go for the flags when making a tackle. A player forced to the ground or forced out of bounds will result in Defensive Holding and/or, if applicable, Unnecessary Roughness penalty.
30. All defensive rushing must be done by avoiding blocks. The defensive player cannot run through a block (Unnecessary Roughness penalty).
31. Defensive players may not attempt to strip the football. Attempted stripping will result in a Personal Foul penalty. A ball that is stripped will not be considered a fumble unless it is an advantage to the offense (ball out of bounds to stop clock, or caught by offense and advanced, etc.)
32. Fumbles can be returned if the defense possesses the ball before it hits the ground.
33. A fumbled snap is a dead ball where the ball hits the ground after it was touched by the QB, and the down will count. A snap that hits the ground first before being touched, will be a 5 yard penalty and replay down.
34. A ball in the air is a live ball until it hits the ground. It still can be possessed by either team if touched and caught in the air before hitting the ground. The ball will be declared dead where it hits the ground, not where it was touched (this includes bad snaps).



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35. The ball will be spotted where the ball carrier's flag (hips) were when the flag was pulled. (Example: The flag was pulled at the 1 yard line, but the ball had crossed the plane of the goal line is not a touchdown)
36. QB sneaks are illegal from under center. The QB can run, but he may not make a direct path over the center. Play will be whistled dead with a loss of down and 5 yard penalty.
37. Illegal motion is at the discretion of the official. If an interior lineman is wobbling, a warning will be given. If any movement results in the defense moving, a flag will be thrown.
38. Motion and shifts are allowed. The man in motion may not move towards the line of scrimmage during his motion. No more than one player may be in motion when the ball is snapped.
39. Rushing a QB with hands up is illegal (for the protection of the pass rusher), doing so will result in a 5Y penalty. If the pass is blocked by the hands it will result in a 15 yard Pass Interference penalty and automatic first down. Any defensive player at the line of scrimmage or in the defensive secondary can block a pass without penalty.
40. A play is dead on any whistle. An inadvertent whistle (whistle blown before flags pulled) results in a dead ball, with the benefit going to the team with possession of the ball at the time of the inadvertent whistle. The resolution will either be a play over from line of scrimmage (or point of turnover if a change of possession involved), or ball spotted where the runner was at the time off the whistle (no loss of down), whichever is closer to the goal the ball carrier is attacking. If there was a turnover and a whistle stops play after the turnover, the turnover will stand. A period may not end on an inadvertent whistle (will run one untimed play). Inadvertent whistle examples
 - a. Ball carrier in backfield – spot ball at original LOS, no loss of down (replay down)
 - b. Ball carrier downfield – spot ball at point of whistle, no loss of down or first down if past first down cone
 - c. INT or kick return – spot of possession or where whistle was blown, whichever is closer the end zone being attacked by the team with possession
 - d. Inadvertent whistle during a play when half expires, one untimed play from spot per rule

BASIC PENALTIES:

1. **5 Yard Penalties:**
 - a) Delay of game
 - b) Off sides / Illegal motion
 - c) Untouched snap hits the ground (no loss of down)
 - d) Defense trying to disrupt offense before the snap
 - e) Illegal forward pass (loss of down)
 - f) Illegal participation (too many players or player not reporting inside the hash marks)
 - g) Defensive holding (Automatic First Down) Includes grabbing and pulling of clothes and stripping of football.
 - h) Rushing passer with hands up, ball not touched (Refer 39)
 - i) Illegal QB Sneak (loss of down)
2. **10 yard Penalties:**
 - a) Offensive Holding
 - b) Offensive Pass Interference (loss of down)
3. **15 yard penalties:**
 - a) Unsportsmanlike Conduct (Foul Language, arguing, fighting, etc.) (Can be automatic ejection!! Coach or Player)
 - b) Unnecessary roughness (Defensive tackle, extended arm block, illegal rush through offensive player, pushing player out of bounds, etc.)
 - c) Defensive Pass interference
 - d) Defensive Pass Rush Tipped Pass – automatic first down (Refer 39)
 - e) Illegal block in back or below the waist or with extended arms



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EJECTIONS:

A player can be ejected after one Unsportsmanlike Conduct or Unnecessary Roughness penalty depending on the severity of the infraction (referee's judgement), and is automatically ejected after two such penalties. Any player or coach ejected from game must sit out the next game.