

Westside Flag Football Rule Book



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1 May 2026

FROM: WFFL Commissioner, Alfredo Grajeda and WFFL CEO, Abel Gonzalez Jr

SUBJECT: Westside Flag Football League Rules and By-Laws

1. **Purpose:** To explain and establish the rules and expectations for all players and participants involved in maintaining the safety and integrity of the WFFL.

2. **Eligibility:**

2.1. Open to all genders over 18 years of age.

2.2. Individuals must present a valid state or school ID to register to the league as well as to play in each game to verify his/her roster spot to their individual team.

2.3. Members of a team that forfeit out of the league will be permitted to join the Player's Pool if, and only if, their team has NOT played more than 50% of the season games.

2.4. Any individual assigned to a team in the league that is caught playing for any other team in the same division is defined as an illegal player and may be subject to suspension at the discretion of the league commissioner.

2.5. Teams found to have illegal players on their roster shall forfeit all games that the player participated.

2.6. It is the responsibility of the coaches/team captains to ensure the eligibility of all players.

2.7. Individuals who are placed on a team from the players' pool are to remain on that team for the duration of the season. If that team forfeits out during the season, having played 50 % of the games, the member will not be placed back into the players' pool, nor can any other team gain this member. The season is over for this player.

3. **Team Rosters:** Rosters must be submitted to the league commissioner prior to the first scheduled game. Team rosters must be typed or handwritten legibly on the league registration forms, without exception, and must include each player's full name, age, date of birth, and type of ID used. Failure to submit a team roster will be a loss for each game played until it is submitted.

3.1. Teams may consist of as many players as desired with a minimum of 6 players, please keep in mind that it is an 8 on 8 league. Any roster changes must be submitted to the commissioner via email. Only coaches/team captains can make changes to the roster.

3.2. Roster changes must be submitted to the league commissioner via email, no later than midnight local time prior to the day of the next scheduled game. Roster changes can

be made up to week 6 of the regular season. No additions can be made after the week 6 deadline.

3.3. Teams from a lower division are only allowed up to 2 players on their roster that are actively on other teams from a higher division.

4. Postponements and Cancellations: To ensure the league is conducted appropriately, postponements and cancellations will be kept to an absolute minimum as circumstances permit. Postponements and cancellations may be made for inclement weather, medical emergencies, or any other situation that is deemed an extenuating circumstance by the league commissioner.

4.1. Requests for postponements or cancellations must be due to any of the reasons listed above and must be approved by the league commissioner.

4.2. The team coach/captain will notify the commissioner no later than 24 hours prior to the next scheduled game.

4.3. All requests for postponements or cancellations will include the reason or nature of the emergency, percentage of players involved, conflicting dates and time, etc. However, if at least 6 players are able to attend the game postponement will be denied.

Note: If postponement or cancellation is denied by the commissioner and a minimum of 6 players fail to attend the game, it will be considered a forfeit, and the team will still be responsible for referee fees for that game.

4.4. The commissioner may postpone or cancel scheduled games for weather related conditions no later than one hour prior to the scheduled game. Within one hour of a scheduled game, the head referee will make the decision to postpone/cancel at the field. If you are NOT notified of a cancellation, the teams involved are to attend as scheduled.

4.4.1 The commissioner will make an attempt to reschedule a postponed/canceled game as circumstances permit, however rescheduled games are never guaranteed.

4.5. Failure to comply with any of the aforementioned policies will result in a forfeit.

5. Fighting, Unsportsmanlike Conduct, and Sportsmanship:

5.1. Sportsmanship can be defined as abiding by the rules of the game, decision of officials, and accepting victory or defeat graciously.

5.2. Unsportsmanlike conduct or fighting by a player or coach will not be tolerated.

5.2.1. This includes any unsportsmanlike conduct or fighting in the general vicinity of the sports fields. Any actions deemed as such will be treated the same as an EJECTION. (Note: This rule also applies to team fans/spectators; see sections 7.31., 7.32. and 7.33.).

5.2.2. First Offense: Will result in the automatic suspension from his/her team's next scheduled game.

5.2.3. Second Offense: Will result in the suspension of that player for the duration of the season.

6. Forfeits:

6.1. If a team does not have at least 6 players present at the scheduled start time of the game, or (after by-law # 6.2 goes into effect). The game will be declared a forfeit, and the opposing team will be awarded a 18-0 win.

6.2. There will be a 10-minute grace period for every game which will start at its original scheduled time. If after 10 minutes have gone by and a team still fails to have 6 players, a forfeit will be declared. Teams should ensure timely game attendance to the maximum extent possible as circumstances permit. Teams will not be given additional time to pick up players, they must do so within the allotted grace period.

6.3. The referee or any member of the WFFL staff may declare a contest forfeited for reason of gross unsportsmanlike conduct. The referee or WFFL staff member will provide a written report of the incident to the league commissioner no later than 24 hours after the incident occurred.

6.4. If a team forfeits two consecutive contests, or three in a season, they will automatically be disqualified from further competition for the remainder of the season and league registration fees will not be refunded.

7. General Rules of Play:

7.1. The current official National Intramural Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA) Football Rules, as amended in these bylaws, will govern all league play.

7.2. Playing Field - The playing field will be 80 yards long and 40 yards wide with 10-yard end zones. The field will be divided into four zones and the ball will be placed on the 20-yard line at the start of each half and after a touchdown or point after. The offensive team will receive four downs to make it to the next zone.

7.3. Playing Time - The game will be played in two 20-minute halves with five minutes between halves (halftime). After time expires in each half there will be a total of 7 plays added to regulation. Each team is allowed two (30-second) time-outs during each half and one during any overtime period. There will be no carryover of time-outs. The clock will run continuously except for time-outs and during the final two minutes of the game. If one team is ahead of the other by 17 points or more at the end of regulation, the game will be considered complete and the extra 7 plays will not occur.

7.4. Overtime Period - When the game ends in a tie score, the referee shall conduct a coin toss to determine possession and field options. The ball shall be placed at the selected 20-yard line. The object is to score a touchdown. Each team will have 4 downs to score a TD and will receive an extra point opportunity. If both teams score a TD and extra point attempt results are the same, then both sides will continue with another 4 downs each. If neither team scores a touchdown, whichever team moves the ball closest to the goal line will be the winner. If either team is intercepted during their four (4) downs prior to scoring, the game is over and the defensive team wins.

7.5. Number of Players - Each team will have eight (8) players on the field but must have a minimum of six (6) to start the game. Teams are allotted 12 roster spots with the payment of their registration fee however can add additional players for an extra fee at the discretion of the commissioner.

7.5.1. If a team fails to have at least 6 players and the opposing team agrees, the team is allowed to pick up players from a different team to fill the remaining slots to avoid a forfeit. Picked up players are not allowed to play the QB position at any point during the game. If a player shows up after the start of the game, one of the added players will no longer be permitted to play. A team is only allowed to pick up until the total number of players reaches 6.

7.5.2. Picking up players is not allowed during playoffs, no exceptions.

7.6. Equipment - Molded cleats or touch football shoes should be worn. No one will wear shoes not designed for football or play barefoot. The ball may not be kicked barefooted. A team's jersey must be similar in color and have unduplicated numbers if numbers are present, jerseys must remain tucked at all times. The pants/shorts must be a different color from the flag and cannot have belt loops or pockets. Ball caps, stocking caps, bucket hats, and headbands are permitted. NO JEWELRY. Pants or shorts must be without pockets. Anyone with pockets will not be permitted to play.

7.6.1. Headwear - Players are allowed to wear any sort of soft headwear such as headbands, stocking caps, hijabs, bucket hats, trucker hats, baseball caps etc. Any and all caps that have a hard bill must be worn backwards for player protection. Note: Failure to comply with referee instructions regarding headwear will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.

7.6.2. Improper Use of Equipment - If a player is found to have open pockets or belt loops, improperly worn flags (Sec 7.16.1.), untucked jerseys, or wearing a cap with a hard bill forward then an improper equipment penalty shall be assessed (see Table 1).

7.6.3 Delay of Game - If a player asks an official to stop the game to check for improper equipment and none exist, the team will then receive a warning and a repeat offense will result in a delay of game penalty.

7.7. Coin Toss and Options - At the beginning of the game, the referee shall toss a coin and the team winning the toss will have the option to RECEIVE, DEFEND a GOAL, or DEFER to the second half. These options rotate between teams until all options are depleted. Unless deferred, at the start of the second half, the team that lost the opening conference shall be given the same options as at the start of the game.

7.8. Team Formation - The offense team must have at least five (5) players on the line of scrimmage at the snap.

7.9. Blocking within the pocket - Offensive linemen are **not allowed** to use their hands while blocking and must keep their hands behind their back or on their sides flush to their body. Shoulder checking, purposely tripping, extension or arms or legs while blocking shall be flagged as an arm/leg extension. Any sort of blocking beyond the line of scrimmage will be flagged as blocking down field/screening. (See Table 1)

7.10. Defensive players lining up on the line of scrimmage must be at least 1 yard off the line.

7.11. No bull rush - Any defensive player lining up over the center must be at least 3 yards off.

7.12. Yardage and Downs - The playing field is divided into four 20-yard zones. A team has four downs in which to advance the ball into the next zone.

7.13. Putting the Ball in Play - The offensive team is allowed 25 seconds to put the ball in play from the line of scrimmage. The time starts when the referee marks the ball ready for play.

7.13.1. The center must hike the ball in between his/her legs and the receiving player must be a minimum of 3 yards away from the center when receiving the ball. Under the center snaps are not allowed.

7.14. Forward Pass - Only one forward pass per down will be allowed and must be thrown from behind the line of scrimmage. Any number of lateral or backward passes may be used from beyond the line of scrimmage.

7.14.1 Teams are only allowed a maximum of 2 lateral or backwards passes to still be able to throw a forward pass from behind the line of scrimmage. After the 3rd lateral the player must run and cannot throw the ball forward.

7.15. Eligible Receivers - All players are eligible receivers.

7.16. Downed Ball - Each player will wear two flags on a belt. The flags will be placed directly over each hip and in line with each trouser leg seam. The ball carrier is considered “tackled” when either flag is pulled free. The ball is dead and downed at the point of the “tackle”. The “tackler” will immediately extend the flag directly over his/her head. The spot of the ball will be based on the position of the players flags after the “tackle”.

7.16.1. Flags - Only popper and Shrummz flags are authorized, and flag color must be different from shorts. Flags must be a minimum of 12 inches in length and are measured from the bottom end of the plastic/rubber popper or shrumm.

7.16.2. Tampered Flags - Tampered flags refers to any alteration or manipulation of the flag belt or flags themselves; including tying, securing foreign objects, or altering their appearance to gain an advantage. Teams are subject to random flag checks conducted by a member of the WFFL staff prior to the commencement of each game. If a player’s flag is found to be tampered with **prior** to the start of a match he/she will not be allowed to play until their flags are changed. If a player’s flags are found to be tampered with **during** a game then they will be reprimanded as follows:

7.16.2.1. First Offense - The game shall be considered a forfeit and the opposing team shall be awarded a 6 - 0 win regardless of score. The player with the tampered flags shall be suspended for 2 games.

7.16.2.2. Second Offense - The game shall be considered a forfeit and the opposing team shall be awarded a 6 - 0 win regardless of score. The player with the tampered flags shall be permanently banned from the league.

7.17. Loss of Flags - If a flag of the ball carrier **inadvertently** falls to the ground, a one-hand touch between the shoulders and the knees constitutes a removal of the flag. Players are allowed to play without flags however they are considered down at the moment they possess the ball.

7.17.1. Flag Equipment Malfunction - If a player’s entire belt falls off at the moment of a flag pull then the player will be considered to be down at that spot. The player must then fix his equipment prior to the next snap and no penalty will be assessed.

7.18. Protecting Flags - Players shall not protect the flag by swinging the arms, tucking the flag in the belt, or placing arms over the flags.

7.19. Intentionally de-flagging - Players shall not de-flag an offensive player before the ball is snapped for the intent to draw a flag and have more time/plays at the end of the

game for their advantage. Players will receive a warning then will be ejected at the second offense.

7.20. Stiff-Arming- A player is prohibited from “stiff-arming” an opponent.

7.21. Fumbles - All fumbles that touch the ground shall be declared dead and the ball belongs to the team fumbling the ball at the spot the player loses possession of the ball.

7.22. Charging and Tackling - A runner shall not charge into nor contact an opponent in his/her path, nor attempt to run between two opponents, or between an opponent and the sideline, unless the space is such as to provide a reasonable chance for him/her to go through without contact. If an opponent has legally established a defensive position in a runner’s path, the runner must change direction to avoid contact.

7.23. Tackling - Penalty is an automatic ejection unless deemed accidental by the refs.

7.24. Screen Blocking – No screen blocking. No downfield blocking and no interlocking blocking.

7.25. Jumping - The ball carrier is allowed to jump with the following restrictions:

7.25.1 Ball carrier cannot dive or attempt to hurdle another player.

7.25.2 Ball carrier cannot jump into a defender or initiate contact with any part of their body, doing so will result in a charging penalty.

7.25.3 Charging - is a penalty where an offensive player illegally runs into a stationary defender, also defined as jumping into a defender while leading with a knee, elbow, head or any other body part. (See Table 1.)

7.26. Protected Scrimmage Kicks - Quick kicks are illegal. Whenever the offensive team wants to kick from scrimmage, the team captain must request a free kick from the referee. Failure to request a free kick from the referee will result in delay of game penalty. Upon requested free kick, the referee will notify the defense, and an actual kick will be made. The defensive team can have up to 3 returners on the field, the rest of the team must vacate the field to the sideline. None of the offensive players may be in motion towards the line of scrimmage until the ball has been kicked.

7.27. Dead Ball - The ball is dead as soon as it touches the ground in all cases except during kicks and snaps from the center position. During kicks and all snaps from the center, if the ball hits the ground untouched, it will be allowed one bounce before being declared a dead ball. The ball is also dead as soon as an official blows his whistle.

7.28. Kick Off after Safety - After a safety, the ball will be punted to the scoring team from the opponents 20-yard line.

7.29. Substitutions - Any number of substitutions may enter the game but must be made before the ball is snapped. Substitutions do not have to be reported to the officials and no time is charged.

7.30. Injury / Blood Rule - Anyone who is injured and/or is bleeding must leave the field of play. He/she may re-enter after the injury is treated or clothing is changed. Players must be checked by the official before re-entering the field of play. The official has the authority to deny re-entry onto the field if in their best judgement the player is not healthy enough to continue. If no substitutions are available, continue with play until substitution is made.

7.31. Ejection of Players – The referee’s judgment of player or team fan/spectator ejection will be final.

7.31.1. All ejections will remain in effect for the remainder of the calendar day. If a player has multiple games in one day and is ejected from one of them then the ejected player cannot participate in any other WFFL games.

7.32. Conduct - Unsportsmanlike conduct, swearing or foul language, obscene gestures, or objective actions by coaches, players, or team fans/spectators, either on or off the field, will not be tolerated by the officials. The second offense of this nature against the same individual shall be penalized by their immediate ejections.

7.33. If a player, manager, team fan/spectator, or coach is ejected, that person will be out of sight and out of sound immediately. If the order of ejection is not obeyed within one minute, the official shall declare the game a forfeit.

7.34. The player, manager, or coach ejected is suspended as stated in section 5.2, and will serve suspension immediately.

7.35. Game Scoring:

7.35.1. Touchdown 6 points

7.35.2. PAT, from 2-yard line 1 points

7.35.3. PAT, from 5-yard line 2 points

7.35.4. PAT, from 10-yard line 3 points

Note: If the defense intercepts a pass on a PAT and returns it to the opposing end zone the team will be awarded with the same number of points that the offense had declared.

7.35.5. Safety 2 points

7.36. Called Game - If the game is called because of a medical emergency or inclement weather, the game will be resumed at the specific point it ended. Officials will note the quarter, time remaining, score, and all other pertinent information.

7.37. Inadvertent Whistle - When an official sounds the whistle inadvertently during a down with no penalty, or during a down in which the penalty for a foul is declined, the ball is dead. When the ball is in player possession, the team in possession may elect to put the ball in play where declared dead or replay the down. During a legal forward pass or a protected scrimmage kick, the ball is returned to the previous spot and the down replayed.

7.38. Safety Concerns - Warming up and stretching prior to games is highly encouraged. Mouthpieces are highly encouraged. All players are also encouraged to be familiar with the safety conditions on the field and the surrounding playing area.

7.39. Penalties – The following is a breakdown of the penalties called in a game. The last two penalties listed (unsportsmanlike conduct, tackling) may result in ejection at the discretion of the head referee.

Table 1:

Penalties	Yardage	From	Auto 1st Down
Off-Sides	5	Line of Scrimmage	No (RTD)
False Start	5	Line of Scrimmage	No (RTD)
Offensive Holding	5	Line of Scrimmage	No (RTD)
Delay of Game	5	Line of Scrimmage	No (RTD)
Illegal Snap/Procedure	5	Line of Scrimmage	No (RTD)
Encroachment	5	Line of Scrimmage	No (RTD)
Too Many Men	5	Line of Scrimmage	No (RTD)
Arm/Leg Extension	5	Line of Scrimmage	No (LOD)
Hands to the Face	10	Line of Scrimmage	No (RTD)
Block in the Back	10	Line of Scrimmage	No (RTD)
Unnecessary Roughness	10	Line of Scrimmage	No (RTD)
Illegal Contact	10	Line of Scrimmage	No (RTD)
Off Pass Interference	10	Line of Scrimmage	No (LOD)
Roughing the QB	10	Line of Scrimmage	Yes
Def Pass Interference	10	Spot Foul	Yes
Defense Holding	10	Spot Foul	No (RTD)
Screening (Blocking Down Field)	10	Spot Foul	No (RTD)

Stiff Arm/Bull Rush	10	Line of Scrimmage	No (RTD)
Flag Guarding	10	Spot Foul	No
Charging	10	Spot Foul	No
Illegal Forward Pass	10	Spot Foul	No
Abusive Language	10	End of Play	No
Improper Equipment	15	Line of Scrimmage	No (LOD)
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	15	End of Play	Yes
Tackling	15	Spot Foul	Yes

RTD – Repeat the Down LOD – Loss of Down

8. Ties in League Standings: In the event of a tie at the end of the season, standings determination will be based on point differential. If the point total was the same, a coin toss between the coaches will decide the higher seed.

9. Post Season (Playoffs):

9.1. Playoffs will be single elimination and take place at the end of the regular season. Number of qualifying teams will be determined by the league commissioner before the beginning of the regular season which will consist of 8 games. Post season will consist of 2 Sundays, some teams may play multiple games in one day. The last remaining team will be declared the champion.

9.2. The rules for the playoffs will remain the same as the regular season.

9.3. A player must play in at least one regular season game to be eligible for the playoffs.

10. Awards:

10.1. One team per division will be declared the WFFL champion.

11. Safety: Each participant should ensure that proper warm-up is conducted prior to participating in any contest. Coaches/captains should ensure safety is the first priority for the team members and proper equipment and techniques are used to ensure player safety.

12. Open Clause: The WFFL Commissioner shall review and modify these Bylaws as necessary to ensure the integrity of this program. Anything not covered in these bylaws will be at the discretion of the league Commissioner.