



# OFFICIAL RULES

Updated: 1/5/2026

## 1. SUMMARY

“FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS” (FNL) flag football is designed to be a 6v6 game filled with fun and action. The offensive team plays for a first down at midfield and a touchdown in the end zone. Running and passing plays are allowed, although there are “No Running Zones” that are 5 yards before midfield and 5 yards before the goal line. The defensive team covers receivers, rushes the passer and pulls flags to make “tackles”. It is intended to be a Minimal - Contact sport.

## 2. THE BASICS

### 2.1. Coin Toss

- 2.1.1. The visiting team calls heads or tails while the coin/puck is in the air.
- 2.1.2. The winner of the toss “TEAM A” chooses either:
  - 2.1.2.1. To play offense or defense first,
  - 2.1.2.2. **OR** direction they want to go on offense.
  - 2.1.2.3. There are ***no*** deferrals
- 2.1.3. “TEAM B” gets the alternative
- 2.1.4. Start of Second Half
  - 2.1.4.1. The possession and direction will flip from the original coin toss.

## 2.2. Possessions

- 2.2.1. There are no kickoffs
- 2.2.2. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its own 5-yard line and has 3 plays to cross midfield for a 1st down.
- 2.2.3. Once a team crosses midfield, they have 3 plays to score a touchdown. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on its own 5-yard line.
- 2.2.4. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its own 5-yard line.
- 2.2.5. All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's own 5- yard line. Interceptions start at the point of a flag pull after the interception.
  - 2.2.5.1. Interceptions may be returned **except** during extra points.

## 2.3. Coaches

- 2.3.1. Depending on the division, coaches may have a coach or coaches on the field.
  - 2.3.1.1. Kindergarten Division
    - 2.3.1.1.1. 2 coaches per team
  - 2.3.1.2. Freshman & Sophomore
    - 2.3.1.2.1. 1 coach per team
  - 2.3.1.3. Junior Division
    - 2.3.1.3.1. **No coaches** allowed on the field
    - 2.3.1.3.2. The primary coach must be identified at the coin toss
- 2.3.2. Coaches are part of the field and must make all efforts to avoid interfering with the play. If it is determined that a coach intentionally interferes with a play, an unsportsmanlike penalty may be called.

## 2.4. Football

- 2.4.1. Each division will play with an approved official Friday Night Lights football. The game ball will be provided by and returned to the referee before and after the game.
  - 2.4.1.1. Kindergarten and Freshman Division
    - 2.4.1.1.1. Will utilize the small size football
  - 2.4.1.2. Sophomore and Junior Division
    - 2.4.1.2.1. Will utilize the medium size football

### **3. TEAMS & PLAYER ROSTER**

#### **3.1. Teams**

- 3.1.1. Teams must have a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 10 players **registered**.
  - 3.1.1.1. FNL cannot control that all registered players report to games each week as players may be absent for various reasons and FNL will not audit or ask for verification of absences.

#### **3.2. Players**

- 3.2.1. Coaches are responsible for creating equal playing time throughout the game and throughout the season. To maintain this, it is required that:
  - 3.2.1.1. All players must play a minimum of 2 quarters.
  - 3.2.1.2. No player should play all 4 quarters unless the team consists of only 6 or 7 eligible players for the game.
  - 3.2.1.3. Substitutions will only be allowed between quarters, unless an injury occurs.
  - 3.2.1.4. If an injury occurs and the injured player returns in the same quarter, the returning player must replace the player who came in for the injured player.
- 3.2.2. Players may only play for teams in which they are registered with.
  - 3.2.2.1. Teams are prohibited from picking up or adding players at will.
  - 3.2.2.2. Teams in which abuse this rule must forfeit games in which included non-registered team player(s).
- 3.2.3. Players are registered based on the grade they will be in during that season in which they are being registered (**not based on the player's age**).
  - 3.2.3.1. If a player is homeschooled then a birth certificate is required showing the name and date of birth.
    - 3.2.3.1.1. FNL will follow the OSSA guidelines for grade equivalent.

### **4. ATTIRE**

#### **4.1. Uniforms**

- 4.1.1. Teams must wear league provided FNL jerseys.
  - 4.1.1.1. If both teams have identical jersey colors then the away team will be directed to flip their jersey to white.
- 4.1.2. Teams must wear shorts of a different color vs their flags and not contain pockets.
  - 4.1.2.1. Any shorts that may be questionable must be approved by FNL before participating.

## **4.2. Flags/Belts**

- 4.2.1. Teams must use FNL branded flags provided by the league.
  - 4.2.1.1. Flags must be a different color than the shorts.
  - 4.2.1.2. Each player must use the same color flag on their team.
  - 4.2.1.3. Velcro must be outward facing and pointing down with FNL logo facing outwards.
  - 4.2.1.4. Belts must be trimmed or tucked into shorts so that they do not hang out
    - 4.2.1.4.1. It is the coaches and players responsibility to check their flags & belts throughout the game.
      - 4.2.1.4.1.1. Referees may remind coaches and teams as a courtesy but **are not responsible for maintaining.**

## **4.3. Shoes**

- 4.3.1. Athletic shoes or cleats must be worn.
- 4.3.2. Cleats with metal spikes are prohibited.

## **4.4. Protective Equipment**

- 4.4.1. Players must wear a protective mouthpiece.
- 4.4.2. Soft cast helmets must be approved by FNL commission before use.
- 4.4.3. Any player wearing medical protective gear (*such as a cast*) must adhere to the following:

*“Hard substance in its final form such as leather, rubber, plastic, plaster or fiberglass when worn on the hand, wrist, forearm or elbow unless covered on all exterior surfaces with no less than 1/2 inch thick, high-density, closed-cell polyurethane, or an alternate material of the same minimum thickness and similar physical properties to protect an injury as directed in writing by a licensed medical physician (M.D./D.O.). Such written direction shall be provided to the umpire prior to the start of the game.”*

## **4.5. Accessories**

- 4.5.1. Hand warmers, towels and/or any other extra equipment worn by a player must not interfere with or block a player’s flags in any way.
- 4.5.2. Any items determined to be causing interference or considered a safety concern must be removed.

## **4.6. Violations**

- 4.6.1. FNL commissioners and referees will determine if there are any uniform, flag, belt or accessories violations.
  - 4.6.1.1. Players who do not adhere to the rules concerning Attire will be ineligible to play until the issue has been rectified.

## **5. INCLEMENT WEATHER & RESCHEDULING GAMES**

### **5.1. Inclement Weather**

5.1.1. Games will be played as scheduled unless threatening weather is present such as hard rain and lightning in the immediate area.

### **5.2. Called Games**

5.2.1. If games are not underway then the games will be rescheduled for a later date.

5.2.2. If the game is currently underway then, the following apply:

5.2.2.1. If the game is called during the first half or at halftime – then the game will be made up at a later date and only the 2nd half will be played resuming with the same score at the time the game was called.

5.2.2.2. If the game is called during the second half – the team winning at the time will be given the win and the game will be final.

### **5.3. Rescheduling Games**

5.3.1. Teams that need to reschedule games must contact the FNL Commissioner for their league location.

5.3.1.1. Games that are rescheduled outside normal dates and times will be accessed with a rescheduling fee to cover fees associated with referees and field expenses.

5.3.1.2. Reschedule requests are not fully guaranteed and are based on referee and field availability.

5.3.1.3. Opposing team must agree to the reschedule - if an agreement cannot be made between the two teams OR if there is no field or time available - the team requesting the reschedule will either need to play the game as regularly scheduled or forfeit the game.

## **6. DIVISIONS, RANKINGS, PLAYOFF SEEDS & BOWLS**

### **6.1. Regular Season Divisions**

6.1.1. Teams are **electronically evaluated** and will be placed in divisions based on experience, previous records, team history and/or coach requests.

6.1.1.1. Requests are **NOT** fully guaranteed, teams may be moved up or down a division based on above criteria.

6.1.1.2. FNL holds the right to evaluate teams if needed and attempt best effort in placing them in the appropriate division.

## 6.2. Determining Standing & Playoff Seeding

6.2.1. Official league standings and playoff seedings are determined by the following in order:

6.2.1.1. Win/loss winning percentage

6.2.1.1.1. This includes all games

6.2.1.2. Head to head match up

6.2.1.3. Points allowed

6.2.1.3.1. Points scored are not calculated and do not impact rankings and/or playoff seedings

6.2.1.4. Coin Flip

## 6.3. Ties in Standings & Playoff Seeding

6.3.1. In the event when multiple teams are tied for the same record and contain different combinations of head to head outcomes in which teams cannot be determined using the above method, then FNL commissioners will evaluate teams to determine playoff seeding.

## 6.4. Bowl Games

6.4.1. Some teams may have a post season "Bowl Game" in lieu of playoff bracket play.

## 6.5. Website Standings

6.5.1. Website standing displayed on FNL's website may not always represent the exact order of ranking.

# 7. GAME CLOCK

## 7.1. Start of Game

7.1.1. Games will start when officially scheduled - any games that cannot be started **on time** due to availability of players or coaches will either need to be played with what players and/or coaches they have at the scheduled game time or forfeit the game.

7.1.1.1. Time will be determined by the referee's clock

7.1.1.2. Any forfeit will be determined and announced by the referee

7.1.1.3. Teams may play with less than 6 players to avoid a forfeit

## 7.2. Game Clock

7.2.1. Quarters are **10 minutes** in length.

7.2.2. Game clock will **continually run** unless:

7.2.2.1. A timeout is called by either team;

7.2.2.1.1. The game clock will restart when the ball is hiked.

7.2.2.2. **OR** when a time out is called by the referee.

7.2.2.2.1. The game clock will restart when directed by the referee.

### 7.3. Quarter Breaks

7.3.1. After quarter 1 and quarter 3 there will be a 1 minute break.

7.3.2. After quarter 2 will be halftime which is a 2 minute break.

### 7.4. Time Outs

7.4.1. Each team will have 2 timeouts per half.

7.4.1.1. Timeouts are 20 seconds in length;

7.4.1.2. Unused timeouts do not carry over;

7.4.1.3. There are no timeouts in overtime.

## 8. PLAY CLOCK

### 8.1. Time

8.1.1. A **35 second play clock** will be used for the following divisions:

8.1.1.1. Kindergarten; Freshman; Sophomore and Junior

### 8.2. Clock Start

8.2.1. Once the ball is spotted, the referee will announce when the play clock starts.

8.2.1.1. The offense can run a play after the ball is spotted and the play clock starts.

## 9. OVERTIME

### 9.1. Basics

9.1.1. If the score is tied at the end of regular regulation, overtime will be conducted.

9.1.2. If the game is still tied after conducting one (1) overtime, the game will be recorded as a tie.

9.1.2.1. During playoffs, additional overtimes will be conducted until a winner has been decided.

9.1.2.2. The Kindergarten Division does not play overtime.

9.1.2.3. Teams in the Recreational League will not play overtime.

9.1.3. Teams will have 30 seconds to identify the players who will play in overtime.

9.1.3.1. Once the line up has been established it cannot be changed unless there is an injury.

### 9.2. Rules

9.2.1. A coin toss will be performed following the rules outlined in **Section 2.1**

9.2.2. The ball will be placed at midfield

9.2.2.1. Each team will go the same direction determined by the coin toss.

9.2.3. Each team will take turns running **3 consecutive downs** to either:

9.2.3.1. Gain the most yards

9.2.3.1.1. Negative yards will be recorded and marked

9.2.3.1.2. If the 2nd team passes the line needed to win; then the game automatically ends without the team needing to run any additional plays.

*(Example: Team 1 runs 3 plays and only gains 7 yards. Team 2 then runs their 1st play and gains 10 yards; no need to run plays 1 and 2. OT is over with Team 2 winning by gaining more yards.)*

9.2.3.1.3.

9.2.3.2. **OR** score the most points

9.2.3.2.1. If a team scores a touchdown, that team will then decide to either attempt a 1 point or 2 point conversion.

9.2.4. If the ball is intercepted by the defensive team, overtime ends and the defensive team will automatically win.

9.2.4.1. There are no interceptions allowed on extra points.

9.2.4.1.1. Refer to section: 14.5 **Interceptions**

## 10. **SCORING**

### 10.1. **Touchdown**

10.1.1. A touchdown is equal to 6 points

### 10.2. **Extra Point**

10.2.1. After a team scores a touchdown, the team will then conduct an extra play for an extra point by selecting one of the following choices:

10.2.1.1. 1 point conversion

10.2.1.1.1. The LOS will be marked at the 5 yard line

10.2.1.1.2. No run-zone will be in effect (*team must pass*)

10.2.1.2. 2 point conversion

10.2.1.2.1. The LOS will be marked at the 12 yard line

10.2.1.2.2. Team may run or pass the ball

10.2.1.3. There are no field goals

10.2.1.4. Interceptions on an extra point cannot be returned

### 10.3. **Safety**

10.3.1. A safety is equal to 2 points

10.3.1.1. The ball is then turned over to the defensive team and returned to the defensive team's 5 yard line

10.3.1.2. Safety will be rewarded upon one of the following:

10.3.1.2.1. Offensive ball carrier's flag is pulled when both feet of the offensive player is located inside the opponent's end zone,

10.3.1.2.2. **OR** the ball is fumbled and both feet of the offensive player who last possessed the ball was located in the opponent's end zone.

#### **10.4. Run Rule**

10.4.1. If a game ends with a spread of 28+ points the game is recorded with only a maximum 28 point spread.

#### **10.5. Forfeit**

10.5.1. If a team forfeits, the opposing team will be awarded the game reflecting as a 28-0 win.

#### **10.6. Final Score**

10.6.1. One coach from each team will sign the team's roster card at the end of the game verifying the final score.

10.6.2. Scores will be final and posted on the website as indicated on the signed roster card.

### **11. PRE-PLAY & SNAP**

#### **11.1. Motion & Shifting**

11.1.1. Only **one player** is allowed in motion at a time.

11.1.1.1. Motion occurs when a player is moving at the time of the snap

11.1.2. Any number of players may shift but **must be reset** before the ball is snapped.

11.1.2.1. A shift occurs when one or more players changes their position on the offensive side of the ball **before** the snap, causing a change in formation.

#### **11.2. Snap**

11.2.1. The ball must be snapped between the center's legs either with the QB directly under center or in long snap formation.

11.2.1.1. Side snaps where the ball is snapped and pitched on the center's side to the QB **is not allowed**.

11.2.1.2. "Side QB" retrieval snap/hand-offs **are not allowed**.

11.2.1.2.1. Side QB retrieval snap/hand-off is defined as when the QB is not facing forward towards the offensive line, but either sideways or in a non-traditional stance.

11.2.1.3. Illegal snap formations will result in a dead ball and loss of down.

11.2.2. The football under center can be re-positioned but not to be lifted off the ground in a

snapping or quick motion before it is officially snapped.

- 11.2.3. If the snap is caught simultaneously or inadvertently by another player, then the player who takes full possession of the snap becomes the quarterback and rules concerning rushing and quarterback clock would apply.

## **12. RUNNING**

### **12.1. Run Plays**

- 12.1.1. Quarterback can not run with the ball directly from the initial snap. (*This includes even if the quarterback is being rushed.*)
- 12.1.2. Handoffs, laterals and pitches are allowed.
  - 12.1.2.1. No center sneaks
    - 12.1.2.1.1. Center sneak is the quarterback taking the snap and handing the ball back to the center between the center's legs.
    - 12.1.2.1.2. The quarterback can hand to the center after clear possession is obtained by the quarterback and the hand off to the center must be around the side of the center and not through the legs.
  - 12.1.2.2. Any player who takes the handoff, lateral or pitch can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage (LOS).
  - 12.1.2.3. Once the ball has been handed off, lateralled, or pitched, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- 12.1.3. Players running with the ball must make an effort to avoid intentionally running over or initiating aggressive contact with a defensive player. Penalty, if called, may result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.

### **12.2. Spinning, Jumping, Hurdling**

- 12.2.1. Spinning and jumping is allowed, however:
  - 12.2.1.1. If a flag is pulled while the player is in the air; the ball is marked where they left their feet before the jump.
  - 12.2.1.2. A player who dives and does not re-establish themselves back on their feet to continue running the ball will be marked where the ball carrier left their feet before they dove.
  - 12.2.1.3. A player who spins, jumps or hurdles a player may result in an unsportsmanlike penalty if the act is deemed **excessive or unsafe** by a supervisor or referee.

## 13. NO RUN ZONE

### 13.1. Locations

- 13.1.1. No-Run zones are designed to avoid short yardage, power running situations and are located 5 yards
  - 13.1.1.1. prior to each end zone (as marked)
  - 13.1.1.2. prior to midfield (as marked).

### 13.2. Legal vs Illegal Play

- 13.2.1. The quarterback **must** throw a forward pass that goes beyond the LOS.
  - 13.2.1.1. A forward pass that is thrown short of the line of scrimmage in the no-run zone is illegal and will result in an offensive penalty.
- 13.2.2. Handoffs, laterals and backwards passes **are not allowed** in the no-run zone.
  - 13.2.2.1. A handoff, backwards pass or lateral in the no-run zone is illegal and will result in an offensive penalty.

### 13.3. Additional

- 13.3.1. If an offensive team has previously gained a first down by crossing mid-field then commits a penalty or conducts a play with negative yards which relocates the new line of scrimmage back on the other side of mid-field; the “NO RUN ZONE” at mid-field does not apply since the team has already gained a first down at mid-field and cannot receive another first down (*minus a defensive penalty*).

## 14. PASSING, RECEIVING & INTERCEPTIONS

### 14.1. Quarterback

- 14.1.1. The quarterback has a seven (7) second “pass clock”.
  - 14.1.1.1. If the quarterback does not relinquish the ball before the 7 seconds expires, it is a dead ball. See **Section 16.4.4** for dead ball instructions.
  - 14.1.1.2. Once the ball is handed off, the seven second rule no longer is in effect.

### 14.2. Passing

- 14.2.1. Defining a forward pass
  - 14.2.1.1. Any forward flipping, forward tossing, passing parallel or forward is considered a forward pass.
  - 14.2.1.2. Players passing the ball forward must be behind the line of scrimmage.
    - 14.2.1.2.1. Once the player crosses the line of scrimmage, they can not pass the ball forward even if they return back behind the line of scrimmage.

- 14.2.1.3. Any play may have any number of backward passes or backward laterals but there can only be 1 forward pass per play.
- 14.2.1.4. A forward handoff is not considered a pass – but the action must be behind the LOS and the new ball carrier can pass the ball forward as long as they follow the same passing rules detailed above and not in the No Run Zone.
- 14.2.2. Shovel passes are allowed.
- 14.2.3. Incomplete passes are considered a dead ball play.
  - 14.2.3.1. See **Section 16.3** for additional details.

### **14.3. Eligible Receivers**

- 14.3.1. All players are eligible to receive passes (including QB, if the ball has been handed off, lateralled or pitched behind the line of scrimmage).
- 14.3.2. One receiver at a time may go into motion.
  - 14.3.2.1. The receiver must be set before another player can go into motion.

### **14.4. Catch**

- 14.4.1. Receiver must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.
- 14.4.2. A pass that is caught by both teams in which both players have equal share of the ball (aka: 50/50, tie up) will automatically be awarded to the offensive team.

### **14.5. Interceptions**

- 14.5.1. Passes may be interceptions and returned.
  - 14.5.1.1. The defense will take over possession where the defensive player's flag is pulled.
  - 14.5.1.2. Any backward or forward pass thrown overhand or underhand that is caught by the opposing team is considered an interception.
  - 14.5.1.3. Interceptions cannot be returned during an extra point try.
    - 14.5.1.3.1. If the ball is intercepted during an extra point try - the play is dead and the extra point is no good.

## **15. DEFENSIVE RUSHERS**

### **15.1. Defensive Rush Line**

- 15.1.1. All players who rush the quarterback must be a minimum of ten (10) yards from the line of scrimmage as marked by the referee when the ball is snapped. This line will be referenced as the "rush line" in this document.
  - 15.1.1.1. A special marker, or the referee, will designate the rush line from the line of scrimmage.

- 15.1.1.2. Any number of players can rush the quarterback from the rush line.
- 15.1.1.3. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage and cannot enter the backfield until the ball leaves the quarterback's hands whether by hand off or pass.
- 15.1.1.4. Once the ball is handed off, the rush line is no longer in effect, and all defenders may go behind the LOS.
- 15.1.1.5. If a defensive rusher encroaches the rush line and does not get back before the ball is snapped, they are no longer eligible to rush until the quarterback relinquishes the ball.
- 15.1.1.6. The defensive rusher must start with their complete body **on** or **behind** the rush line. (*Example: a rusher cannot have their back foot on the line and lean forward encroaching over the rush line - they must be completely on or behind the rush line*).
- 15.1.1.7. Rusher must wait until the ball is snapped and not on the word hike.
  - 15.1.1.7.1. If a rusher leaves the rush line before the ball is snapped and continues to rush into the backfield, **crossing the LOS**, **and the quarterback has not relinquished the ball** from the initial snap by the time the rusher reaches the line of scrimmage; will result in a defensive penalty.
  - 15.1.1.7.2. If a rusher leaves the rush line before the ball is snapped and continues to rush into the backfield, **crossing the LOS**, and **the quarterback has relinquished the ball** from the initial snap by the time the rusher reaches the line of scrimmage; it is considered a legal rush since the quarterback no longer has the ball.

## **15.2. Defensive Rushing**

- 15.2.1. Offensive players cannot ***purposely*** attempt to block or pick a defensive rusher, but must be running a defined route and try to make some attempt to avoid contact - *this excludes incidental contact*.
  - 15.2.1.1. It is up to the referee to determine if a receiver was running a legal route or attempting to block or pick.
  - 15.2.1.2. If a defensive player jumps to block a pass from the passer and comes down on the passer OR hits the passer's arm while in a throwing motion OR makes ***excessive*** contact with the passer while trying to pull the passer's flag; will result in a penalty.

### 15.3. Mercy Rule

- 15.3.1. If a team is leading by 20 or more points, the team leading cannot rush the opposing team's QB until the point spread falls under 20 points again.

## 16. DEAD BALL

### 16.1. Flags & Apparel

#### 16.1.1. Ball carrier's flag is:

- 16.1.1.1. Pulled by a player
- 16.1.1.2. Falls of,
- 16.1.1.3. Carrier only has 1 flag,
- 16.1.1.4. **OR** ball carriers' flags are covered by an untucked jersey, accessories or are positioned in a way that *inhibits* a defensive player from having the ability to pull them.
  - 16.1.1.4.1. This is very subjective and up to the referee to determine the severity of the issue.
  - 16.1.1.4.2. Warnings may be given instead of dead ball.
  - 16.1.1.4.3. It is the coaches and players responsibility to check their flags throughout the game.
    - 16.1.1.4.3.1. Referees may remind coaches and teams as a courtesy but **are not responsible for maintaining.**
- 16.1.1.5. The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's front foot is when the flag is pulled, **not where the ball is located.**

### 16.2. Fumble

- 16.2.1. There are no fumbles in FNL.
- 16.2.2. If the ball is fumbled or is a bad snap the following will apply:
- 16.2.2.1. Dropped snap or bad snap that hits the ground ***before possession is obtained*** is a dead ball and loss of down, but the ball is placed back at the line of scrimmage. This is only for a bad snap.
  - 16.2.2.2. Any fumble that hits the ground ***after possession is obtained***, is a dead ball and loss of down, but the ball is placed where the feet of the player were when they last possessed it.
  - 16.2.2.3. If a ball is fumbled and caught in mid-air before the ball hits the ground - it is considered dead at the spot of the offensive runner's feet and remains with the offensive team (there are no fumbles in FNL).

### 16.3. Incomplete Pass

- 16.3.1. A **forward** pass that is incomplete moves to the next down and marked back at the original line of scrimmage.
- 16.3.2. A **backward** pass that is incomplete moves to the next down and is marked where the passer's feet were when the ball was thrown.

### 16.4. Additional

- 16.4.1. Ball carrier steps out of bounds.
- 16.4.2. Touchdown or safety is scored.
- 16.4.3. Any part of the player's body (*besides feet or hands*) touches the ground.
- 16.4.4. Quarterback does not relinquish the ball before the 7 second quarterback clock expires.
  - 16.4.4.1. Result is loss of the current down.
  - 16.4.4.2. Ball remains at the line of scrimmage.

### 16.5. Inadvertent whistle

- 16.5.1. If an inadvertent whistle occurs during a play which no dead ball action occurred causing the whistle to be blown, the team who possesses the ball at the time of the inadvertent whistle may decide between:
  - 16.5.1.1. Taking the ball at spot where the play was blown dead
    - 16.5.1.1.1. Any penalties which occurred during the play will be assessed as such according to normal rules.
  - 16.5.1.2. **OR** replay the down from original LOS
    - 16.5.1.2.1. Replaying a down will annul any penalty which was flagged during the play.

## 17. **PENALTIES**

### 17.1. Accessing Penalty

- 17.1.1. All penalties will be assessed from the line scrimmage unless declined or addressed in other areas of the rules.
  - 17.1.1.1. All penalties can be declined.
- 17.1.2. Penalty yardage will be assessed according to the penalty unless the full yardage cannot be fully applied; in this case the yardage will be half the distance to the goal.
- 17.1.3. A penalty, in which occurs after a defensive interception - the penalty will be assessed from where the ball was intercepted unless the penalty is a spot foul.
- 17.1.4. If an offensive penalty occurs during an extra point try, the extra point attempt is lost.

## **17.2. Penalty & No Run Zone**

- 17.2.1. If a penalty happens within the “NO RUN ZONE” and moves the ball outside the “NO RUN ZONE” - the “NO RUN ZONE” no longer applies.
- 17.2.2. If the penalty moves the ball inside the “NO RUN ZONE” then the “NO RUN ZONE” does apply.

## **17.3. Additional**

- 17.3.1. If a penalty is flagged, the play will continue until a dead ball action ensues as described in **Section 16**.
  - 17.3.1.1. Unless the penalty is a pre-snap penalty, which will result in the play being immediately dead.
- 17.3.2. Coaches, players and fans are not allowed to enter a referee huddle unless otherwise directed.
- 17.3.3. Any penalty deemed excessive may be called for unsportsmanlike conduct.
- 17.3.4. Supervisor and FNL staff hold the right to intervene in any game which may need additional assistance and act as a referee or override any ruling if deemed necessary.

## **18. DEFENSIVE PENALTIES**

### **18.1. Offsides**

- 18.1.1. **5 yards** and auto 1<sup>st</sup> down from the line of scrimmage

### **18.2. Pass Interference**

- 18.2.1. **5 yards** and auto 1<sup>st</sup> down from the line of scrimmage

### **18.3. Illegal Flag Pull**

- 18.3.1. **5 yards** and auto 1<sup>st</sup> down from the line of scrimmage
- 18.3.2. Defined as the defensive player **intentionally** pulling the ball carrier’s flag before possessing the ball - the intention is a judgment call by the referee.

### **18.4. Illegal Rushing**

- 18.4.1. **5 yards** and auto 1<sup>st</sup> down from the line of scrimmage
- 18.4.2. This penalty includes encroachment, starting rush from inside the 10 yard marker or starting too soon from the 10 yard marker and continuing after the quarterback and crossing the LOS while the quarterback possesses the ball from the initial snap.

### **18.5. Coach/Spectator Inference**

- 18.5.1. **5 yards** and auto 1<sup>st</sup> down from the line of scrimmage
  - 18.5.1.1. Unsportsmanlike penalty may be issued depending on severity

18.5.2. Any coach, fan or player who intentionally interferes with a play or player during a live ball play.

**18.5.3. Illegal Substitution**

18.5.3.1. **5 yards** and auto 1<sup>st</sup> down from the line of scrimmage

18.5.3.2. This includes player substituting mid-quarter and/or player(s) playing in a quarter that are not adhering to the roster/lineup card.

18.5.3.2.1. *This excludes a player substituting or playing for a player who has been identified as being injured.*

**18.6. Illegal Contact**

18.6.1. **5 yards** and auto 1<sup>st</sup> down from the line of scrimmage

18.6.2. This penalty includes: pulling AND holding jersey, shorts or belt and includes tripping or holding or other minimal intentional contact.

**18.7. Tackling/Pushing Out of Bounds/Aggressive Contact**

18.7.1. **10 yards** from end of play where incident occurred and auto 1<sup>st</sup> down

18.7.1.1. Defenders can dive to pull an offensive player's flag, however they must control their body, if they dive and make excessive contact or wrap up, take out the legs, pull down, or run through an offensive player to pull a flag OR push a player out of bounds to stop them - then it is considered a tackle.

**18.8. Last Man Standing**

18.8.1. Automatic TD + potential unsportsmanlike penalty and ejection from game

18.8.2. This is defined as when the last defender tackles, pushes down or holds the ball carrier instead of pulling flag or intentionally pulls flag early to prevent a TD.

**18.9. Additional**

18.9.1. Incidental contact may be determined by the referees if it is deemed that contact accidental or due to simply giving strong effort.

18.9.1.1. This is determined by the referee and cannot be argued!

18.9.2. Halves can not end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines the penalty

18.9.2.1. Offense plays an untimed down.

## 19. OFFENSIVE PENALTIES

### 19.1. False Start

- 19.1.1. **5 yards** from LOS and loss of current down
- 19.1.2. Penalty includes: Illegal motion (*more than 1 offensive player moving or moving forward at snap*); False start; Double snap; Offsides

### 19.2. Illegal Play

- 19.2.1. **5 yards** from LOS and loss of current down
- 19.2.2. Includes: Run play inside the “No Run Zone”; or quarterback running with the ball from the initial snap; or “post-snap huddle” formation or plays to purposely deceive the defense that is considered outside normal play.
  - 19.2.2.1. Post snap huddle formation is defined as 3 or more players **huddled** together after initial snap to fake or hand off to a player in the huddle.
  - 19.2.2.2. QB must have **clear possession of the snap** with **clear possession change** when relinquishing the ball.
  - 19.2.2.3. Deception is based on referee judgement.

### 19.3. Illegal Forward Pass

- 19.3.1. **5 yards** from LOS and loss of current down
- 19.3.2. A passer crosses the LOS and throws the ball forward.
  - 19.3.2.1. Entire body must be past LOS

### 19.4. Offensive Pass Interference

- 19.4.1. **5 yards** from LOS and loss of current down

### 19.5. Blocking

- 19.5.1. **5 yards** from LOS and loss of current down
- 19.5.2. ***Intentionally*** blocking, picking or shielding a defender from the runner or receiver.

### 19.6. Flag Guarding

- 19.6.1. **5 yards** from LOS and loss of current down
- 19.6.2. Intentionally keeping defenders from grabbing the ball carrier’s flag.

### 19.7. Charging

- 19.7.1. **5 yards** from LOS and loss of current down
- 19.7.2. Intentionally running over or spinning out of control into a defender.
  - 19.7.2.1. A defender may stop and set up in the ball carrier’s path, it is the ball carrier's responsibility to avoid contact by changing directions.

## 19.8. Delay of Game

19.8.1. **5 yards** from LOS and loss of current down

## 19.9. Coach/Spectator Inference

19.9.1. **5 yards** from LOS and loss of current down

19.9.1.1. Unsportsmanlike penalty may be issued depending on severity

19.9.2. Any coach, fan or player who intentionally interferes with a play or player during a live ball play.

## 19.10. Illegal Substitution

19.10.1. **5 yards** from LOS and loss of current down

19.10.2. This includes player substituting mid-quarter and/or player(s) playing in a quarter that are not adhering to the roster/line-up card.

## 19.11. Additional

19.11.1. Incidental contact may be determined by the referees if it is deemed that contact accidental or due to simply giving strong effort.

19.11.2. All offensive penalties are a loss of down (*including an extra point try*).

## 20. SPORTSMANSHIP

### 20.1. Unsportsmanlike Conduct

20.1.1. If the field supervisor, referee or commissioner witnesses **any** acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or **any** Unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped, and the player/coach or fan **may** be ejected from the game.

20.1.1.1. Unsportsmanlike conduct on a coach who is initially allowed to be on the field **may be** prohibited to the sideline for the remainder of the game before being ejected.

20.1.1.1.1. This order of operations is not a guarantee order before an ejection if deemed necessary based on its severity.

20.1.2. Foul play, foul language and unsportsmanlike conduct by anyone will not be tolerated!!

20.1.2.1. Any player, fan, coach or spectator who commits any of the following **before, during or after** any game will be automatically **ejected** from the field and premises, plus the team will be **issued a disciplinary point** and their team will be issued an **unsportsmanlike penalty** if the action is before or during a game.

20.1.2.1.1. Foul language

- 20.1.2.1.2. Foul gesture
- 20.1.2.1.3. Gesture or language to provoke FNL staff, player, coach or fan
- 20.1.2.1.4. Disrespectful comments at FNL staff, player, coach or fan
- 20.1.2.1.5. Physical contact with any FNL staff, player, coach or fan
- 20.1.2.1.6. Any sideline coach, fan or player who comes onto the field during any game to protest a call or decision by the referee, field supervisor or commissioner

20.1.2.1.6.1. A sideline coach is any coach that is **not actively on the field** with their team at that current time or not identified as the **primary coach** in the Junior division.  
*Example: Defensive coach is on the field with their team while the opposing team has the ball, the offensive coach who is not on the field at the time comes onto the field to argue a call. The offensive coach will be immediately ejected.*

20.1.3. Anyone ejected from a game (player, coach, fan) for any reason, may not be allowed on the premises for the next game.

20.1.3.1. The game **will not continue** until the ejected party has left the premises.

20.1.3.2. If they do not leave, the referee **will forfeit the game immediately** and award the win to the opposing team.

20.1.3.3. If they are ejected a 2<sup>nd</sup> time during the season, the individual will be subject to possible **dismissal** and **banned** from the league with NO REFUND.

20.1.4. Any game deemed **“out of control”** due to unsportsmanlike conduct by a fan, player or coach may be called and the score at the time of the game being called, will be final.

20.1.5. Coaches are expected to monitor fan conduct and **may** be directed to assist.

20.1.5.1. Failure to assist may result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.

## 20.2. Penalty

20.2.1. Defensive unsportsmanlike act:

20.2.1.1. committed during a play

20.2.1.1.1. penalty is 10 yards from the end of the play, and auto 1st down

20.2.1.2. committed during a dead ball

20.2.1.2.1. penalty is 10 yards from the current LOS, and auto 1st down

- 20.2.2. Offensive unsportsmanlike act:
  - 20.2.2.1. committed during a play
    - 20.2.2.1.1. penalty is 10 yards from the original LOS, and loss of that down
  - 20.2.2.2. committed during a dead ball
    - 20.2.2.2.1. penalty is 10 yards from the current LOS, and loss of upcoming down
- 20.2.3. A player may also be ejected along with an assessed penalty.
- 20.2.4. Any coach OR player OR fan that is issued **two** unsportsmanlike penalties within a single game will be automatically ejected.
  - 20.2.4.1. This order of operations is not a guarantee order before an ejection if deemed necessary based on its severity.

### 20.3. Spectators

- 20.3.1. Fans must sit on the same sideline as their team and be on the opposite sideline of the opposing team.
- 20.3.2. Any individual not actively participating on the field **MUST** be **3** feet back from the sidelines OR **10** yards back off the endzone.
- 20.3.3. If **ANY** spectator who is *not* sitting on the same sideline as their team OR causes interference with the play, players or referee OR comes onto the field any time (*minus taking care of an injury or before or after the game*), an **unsportsmanlike conduct penalty** may be called and/or individual(s) may be **ejected**.

### 20.4. Disciplinary Points

- 20.4.1. Any team in which a coach, player, fan or any individual associated with the team is ejected; that team will receive a disciplinary point against the team.
  - 20.4.1.1. **One point** will be issued **per game for any ejection** that occurs.
    - 20.4.1.1.1. If multiple ejections occur against a team during a single game - the team will receive only a *single* disciplinary point, however the game *may be called* due to being "**out of control**".
  - 20.4.1.2. All teams will start with 0 disciplinary points at the beginning of the season.
    - 20.4.1.2.1. Points issued will accumulate throughout the season and playoffs and will be tracked internally by FNL.
    - 20.4.1.2.2. Points do not reset after any disciplinary action is imposed.
    - 20.4.1.2.3. FNL may reserve the right to review and reverse any disciplinary point issued.

20.4.1.3. Teams who have accumulated multiple disciplinary points will be issued a disciplinary action according to the total points they have been issued.

20.4.1.3.1. Disciplinary point actions are as followed:

<b>Disciplinary Action</b>	<b>Total Points Issued</b>
Team will forfeit next game	2 points
Team will be banned from participating in playoffs	3 points
Team will be banned from participating in playoffs + forfeit remaining regular season games	4 points

## **REMEMBER**

- **COACHES COACH**
- **PLAYERS PLAY**
- **REFEREES REF**
- **FANS CHEER**