

# LWYS FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

## ALL DIVISIONS 2025

All players and coaches agree that we play this game to safely have fun and learn the great team sport of football. All participants agree to do their best to create an environment where the players can experience the joy of the game without unnecessary pressure, stress or rigidity.

### 1. Eligibility

- 1.1. Fall Season: K-4<sup>th</sup> Grade
- 1.2. Spring Season: 1st-7th Grade

### 2. Levels of Play

- 2.1. Fall Season levels of play are determined by grade levels.
  - 2.1.1. Flyweights: K-1 Grade
  - 2.1.2. Bantamweights: 2nd Grade
  - 2.1.3. Featherweights: 3-4 Grade
- 2.2. Spring Season levels of play are determined by grade levels and subject to change based on enrollment numbers.
- 2.3. All levels will play 7 on 7 style football. The Center is not eligible to catch passes or receive hand-offs.
  - 2.3.1. Offense can play with 6 players (Center is the 7<sup>th</sup> player)
    - 2.3.1.1. The Quarterback can take the ball right off the tee to simulate a snap.
    - 2.3.1.2. If a team wants to do a shotgun snap, they can do that with a Center, but the ball must start on the tee.

### 3. Fall Season

- 3.1. At least seven total regular season games, six played on Saturday and at least one game at LHS on a Sunday. There also may be a doubleheader on one Saturday.
- 3.2. Bantam & Featherweight – scores and standings are kept, there are playoffs and a championship is awarded.
- 3.3. Playoffs - Week 8 will be the 1<sup>st</sup> round of playoffs (1 vs 8, 2 vs 7, etc.).

### 4. Rosters & Game Play

- 4.1. Rosters will be assigned by the LWYS Board following player evaluations.
- 4.2. All levels must have at least 6 players to start a game.
  - 4.2.1. Offense is only required to have 6 players on the field at any time.
  - 4.2.2. The offense can have a maximum of 7 players on the field at any given time.
  - 4.2.3. Center is not an eligible ball carrier or receiver.
    - 4.2.3.1. Offense can have the Center on the field to snap the ball from the tee to the Quarterback and be a blocker on the field.
    - 4.2.3.2. The Center may not move downfield on a pass play. The resulting penalty from a Center downfield on a pass play will be an "Illegal Forward Pass"

- 4.2.4. Defense can have a maximum of 7 players on the field at any given time and a minimum of 6.

## **5. Player Participation**

- 5.1. Every eligible player must play at least one (1) half on offense and one (1) half on defense. Coaches are required to play their players in as many different offensive and defensive positions as possible throughout the season. If roster sizes prevent this, please discuss with the LWYS Board to ensure adherence.
- 5.2. No player may play Quarterback in both halves of a regular season or post season games.
  - 5.2.1. If a team elects to rotate the Quarterback position every series, a player will still not be permitted to play Quarterback in both halves.
  - 5.2.2. Every rostered player MUST play a minimum of one entire offensive series at the quarterback position during the season.
- 5.3. There are no situational substitutions or positional changes for special situations such as at the goal line, PAT, or on fourth down, absent an injury.
  - 5.3.1. If a situational substitution occurs, it will be a dead ball and resulting penalty of Delay of Game, which will be an automatic loss of down.

## **6. Coaches**

- 6.1. Coaches are volunteer parents or family members helping the players learn and enjoy the game. Parents are encouraged to support the coaches at all times.
- 6.2. One coach is allowed on the field at any time to direct players for Bantam and Featherweight levels. Two coaches are allowed on the field to direct players at the Flyweight level.
- 6.3. Coaches are expected to adhere to the LWYS Code of Conduct and Coaching Pledge.
- 6.4. Any coach that is removed from a game will not be allowed to coach the following game. If a second removal occurs, coaches will be removed from the team for the remainder of the season, and will no longer be given consideration for a future coaching assignment within LWYS.
  - 6.4.1. Coaches will be ejected from a game if they receive two un-sportsman like penalties called on them by an official.
  - 6.4.2. Officials or an LWYS Board Member can eject a coach for behavior that does not fall within the league's coach of conduct policy.
- 6.5. Coaches are not permitted to move the tee stand down the field of play. Only the officials may move the stand and set the ball on the stand.

## **7. Games**

- 7.1. At the start of each game, both teams shall meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who shall start with the ball. The visiting team shall call the toss.
- 7.2. The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense, defense or defer to the second half.
- 7.3. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at the 40-yard line and has four (4) plays to cross the 20-yard line.

- 7.3.1. If the offensive team fails to cross the 20-yard line, possession of the ball changes and the opposing team begins its drive from its own 40-yard line.
- 7.3.2. Once a team crosses the 20-yard line they have four (4) plays to score a touchdown. If the offense fails to score, possession of the ball changes and the opposing team begins its drive from its own 40-yard line.

## **8. Equipment**

- 8.1. LWYS provides flag belts, jerseys and footballs.
- 8.2. Players must wear shoes. Football cleats are encouraged, and no cleats with exposed metal are allowed and must be removed.
- 8.3. Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads, and kneepads. Braces with exposed metals are not allowed.
- 8.4. Players must remove all watches, necklaces, earrings and any other jewelry.
- 8.5. Player's jerseys must be tucked into the pants if they hang below the belt line.
- 8.6. Players must provide and use a protective mouthpiece, and athletic support cups are encouraged. Mouthpiece is required to play in the game. Lack of compliance will result in a penalty.

## **9. Field**

- 9.1. Flyweight, Bantamweight and Featherweight
  - 9.1.1. The field dimensions are 53  $\frac{1}{3}$  yards by 40 yards with one 10-yard end zone, and a line-to-gain/first down at the 20-yard line.
- 9.2. No-Run Zones are in place to prevent teams from conducting power run plays. While in the No-Run Zones, teams cannot run the ball in any fashion. All plays run within No-Run Zones must be forward pass plays.
  - 9.2.1. Flyweight level does not utilize No-Run zones.
  - 9.2.2. Bantamweight and Featherweight levels utilize a No-Run zone within 5-yards of the goal line and 20-yard line that is inclusive to both running backs and Quarterbacks. This includes a Quarterback being blitzed or rushed; they are not allowed to run past the line of scrimmage.
  - 9.2.3. If an offensive penalty results in the ball being placed behind the No-Run Zone, the defensive team shall have the option to decline the penalty.
- 9.3. Stepping on the boundary line is considered out of bounds.

## **10. Timing and Overtime**

- 10.1. Games are played on a 40-minute continuous clock with two (2) twenty-minute halves. The clock stops only for timeouts, injuries, at the discretion of the referee, and for the following game situations:
  - 10.1.1. The clock will stop within the last minute of the half or the end of the game for:
    - 10.1.1.1. Touchdown - Starts on the snap
    - 10.1.1.2. Turnover Change of possession - Starts on the snap
    - 10.1.1.3. Out of bounds - Starts on the snap
    - 10.1.1.4. Incomplete pass - Starts on the snap

- 10.1.1.5. First Down - Clock will start on the official
- 10.2. Halftime is 5 minutes in length.
- 10.3. Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 40 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced. Referee discretion will be utilized at the Flyweight level. This will be strictly enforced at the Bantam and Featherweight levels.
  - 10.3.1. After a change of possession and spotting of the ball, the defense shall be permitted 30 seconds to get players to the line of scrimmage. After 30 seconds, the offense will be allowed to snap the football regardless of the defense being set.
- 10.4. Each team has one (1) 60-second timeout per half.
- 10.5. If the score is tied at the end of 40 minutes, the game should be determined a tie. (Overtime rules will only be used during the playoffs).
  - 10.5.1. Overtime rules
    - 10.5.1.1. Each team gets a possession on the 10-yard line and has 4 plays to score.
    - 10.5.1.2. An interception secures the game. The intercepting team shall not need to run an offensive series.
    - 10.5.1.3. If the score remains tied after the first overtime period, the team that was first on defense will go to offense, and it will continue alternating until there is a winner.
    - 10.5.1.4. If the score remains tied after the second overtime period, teams will be required to go for the 2-point conversion after scoring a touchdown.

## 11. Scoring (Bantamweight and Featherweight Levels)

- 11.1. Touchdown: 6 points
- 11.2. PAT (Point After Touchdown) 1 point (5-yard line; pass only) or 2 points (10-yard line; run or pass)
  - 11.2.1. A team that scores a touchdown must declare whether it wishes to attempt a 1-pt. conversion (from the 5-yard line) or a 2-pt. conversion (from the 10-yard line). Any change, once a decision is made to try for the extra point, requires a charged time out. If a team does not have a timeout remaining, it will be deemed a loss of down and unsuccessful point after attempt. Decision cannot be changed after a penalty.
- 11.3. Interceptions: 1 point
  - 11.3.1.1. An interception cannot be returned, but will result in 1 point and possession of the ball at the 40-yard line for the intercepting team.
- 11.4. Bantamweights and Featherweights Touchdown Rule Limit
  - 11.4.1. If a player scores **2 touchdowns** in a game (running and/or receiving), the following will apply to that player for the remainder of the game:
    - 11.4.1.1. The players flag should be removed, and they must be moved to a defensive position only

- 11.4.1.2. They are allowed to score the extra point after either one of their touchdowns.
- 11.4.1.3. A player can score as many 1-point or 2-point conversions as long as they have not scored two touchdowns.

## **12. Live Ball/Dead Ball**

- 12.1. The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.
- 12.2. The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage. It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on defense or offense enters the neutral zone. The official may give both teams a “courtesy” neutral zone notification to allow their players to move back behind the line of scrimmage.
- 12.3. A player who gains possession in the air is considered in bounds as long as one foot comes down in the field of play.
- 12.4. The defense may not mimic the offensive team signals by trying to confuse the offensive players while the Quarterback is calling out signals to start the play. This will result in an unsportsmanlike penalty.
- 12.5. Any official can whistle the play dead.
- 12.6. Play is ruled “dead” when:
  - 12.6.1. The ball hits the ground.
  - 12.6.2. The ball carrier’s flag is pulled.
  - 12.6.3. The ball carrier steps out of bounds.
  - 12.6.4. The ball carrier’s knee or arm hits the ground
  - 12.6.5. The ball carrier uses their hand to prevent their flag or belt from being pulled.
  - 12.6.6. A touchdown, PAT or interception is scored.
  - 12.6.7. In the event a ball carriers flags fall off without a defender making an attempt at the flag, a one-hand touch will go into effect at the discretion of the referee.
  - 12.6.8. A player receives a handoff or catches the ball while in possession of one or no flag(s).
  - 12.6.9. A ball carrier dives, leaps or jumps while in possession of the ball.
  - 12.6.10. A player fumbles. The ball is spotted where the official determines it hit the ground.

## **13. Running & Handoffs**

- 13.1. The ball is spotted where the line of gain is when the flag is pulled, as determined by the official.
- 13.2. The Quarterback can directly run with the ball past the line of scrimmage at all levels once per drive. The Quarterback does have the ability to scramble in the back field during the normal 3-second rush, but cannot advance the ball beyond the line of scrimmage if the one run per drive has already been used.
- 13.3. Direct handoffs, pitches or laterals behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Handoffs may be in front, behind, or to the side of the offensive player, but must

be behind the line of scrimmage. The offense may use multiple handoffs. Players who receive handoffs are allowed to throw the ball as long as the hand off takes place behind the line of scrimmage. The Quarterback can become an eligible receiver.

- 13.4. Once the ball has left the Quarterback's hands, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- 13.5. Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping, or jumping will be a dead ball and result in loss of down and return to the original line of scrimmage.
- 13.6. Spinning is allowed, but players may not leave their feet to avoid a flag pull. Jumping in the air in a forward motion to advance the ball, while attempting to avoid a flag pull, is not allowed. Lateral moves to the left or right are permitted.
- 13.7. Runners may leave their feet if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid collision with another player without a flag guarding penalty enforced.
- 13.8. Blocking & Screening – Blocking is permitted and a legal block is one in conformance with rule 13.8.1
  - 13.8.1. Blocking should be in front of the player. Hands and arms must be behind your back or across the chest and within the body's framework. Use of the hands are not permitted, and shall result in an unnecessary roughness penalty.
    - 13.8.1.1. There are no crack back blocks, no double team blocks, no shoulder charges.
- 13.9. Flag Obstruction – All jerseys **MUST** be tucked in before play begins.
- 13.10. Ball carriers are permitted to swat away the hands of the defender attempting to pull their flag. The ball carrier may not grab onto their own flag and/or belt to prevent the flags from being pulled off. Doing so will constitute a dead ball, and the player will be ruled down by contact at that point.
- 13.11. Ball carriers are not permitted to stiff arm a defender.

## 14. Passing

- 14.1. All passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage and received beyond the line scrimmage or behind the line of scrimmage.
- 14.2. Shovel passes are allowed, but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
- 14.3. Double passes are allowed as long as the first pass is determined to be a lateral behind the line of scrimmage.

## 15. Receiving

- 15.1. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. Forward motion toward the line of scrimmage is not allowed.
- 15.2. A player must have a least one foot inbounds when making a reception.
- 15.3. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
- 15.4. Interceptions change the possession, and award the defensive team 1 point at the bantamweight and featherweight levels.

15.5. Interceptions are dead balls.

## 16. Rushing the Passer

- 16.1. All players who rush the passer must wait a minimum of three (3) seconds after the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. The defense does not have to identify who is rushing on any given play.
- 16.2. Once the ball is handed off, the three second rule is no longer in effect and all defenders may rush behind the line of scrimmage.
- 16.3. The referee will count the three seconds aloud. (We will also use the timer on the tee)
- 16.4. Blitz does not have to be declared and it can be any defender, or multiple defenders, prior to the three (3) seconds.
- 16.5. Defensive players are not required to maintain a minimum distance off the line of scrimmage, or off the tee stand. No portion of their body may cross the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped or this will result in an offsides penalty.
  - 16.5.1. A legal rush is:
    - 16.5.1.1. Any rush from the defense after the three (3) second count has expired.
    - 16.5.1.2. A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off by the Quarterback
  - 16.5.2. A penalty may be called if:
    - 16.5.2.1. The rusher crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff, pass, or snap – Illegal Rush (10 yards LOS).
    - 16.5.2.2. Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped - Offside (10 yards LOS).
    - 16.5.2.3. Any defensive player, not lined up at the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed or handed off – Illegal Rush (10 yards LOS).
  - 16.5.3. Special circumstances:
    - 16.5.3.1. Teams are not required to rush the Quarterback.
    - 16.5.3.2. The defense is awarded **one blitz per half**, which negates the three second count. This can be any defender, or multiple defenders, prior to the three (3) seconds.
    - 16.5.3.3. Referees will keep track of the blitzes per half like timeouts.
    - 16.5.3.4. Players rushing the Quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however, NO contact can be made with the Quarterback in any way. Blocking the pass or attempting to block the pass and then making contact with the passer will result in a roughing the passer penalty.
- 16.6. A sack occurs if the Quarterback's flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball is placed where the line of gain is determined by the official when flag is pulled.
  - 16.6.1. The ball cannot be placed deeper than the 40-yard starting line.

## **17. Flag Pulling**

- 17.1. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball and the flag is removed from the belt. This ends the play and the ball is placed at the spot or yard line where the flag was removed.
- 17.2. Defenders can dive to pull flags, but cannot tackle, hold or run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
- 17.3. A defensive player must “play the flag” and not the man. Any action against the ball carrier other than merely pulling his flag will be deemed unnecessary roughness.
  - 17.3.1. If an official determines that a defender did not attempt to grab a flag and there was a clear path to the end zone it will be called a touchdown.
- 17.4. If a player’s flag inadvertently falls off during the play with no defenders in the area and no flag pull has been attempted, the player is subject to one-hand touch. This rule is at the discretion of the referee.
- 17.5. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball. Doing so will result in a penalty for Illegal Flag Pulling.

## **18. Formations (All Levels)**

- 18.1. Offensive players must come to a complete stop for one second before the ball is snapped unless he/she is the only player in motion.
- 18.2. Movement by a player who is set or a player who runs toward the line of scrimmage while in motion is considered a false start.
- 18.3. The Quarterback will have the option to take the snap from the tee. The Center can also snap the ball back to the Quarterback from the tee. The Quarterback cannot begin a running movement before the call of “hike” or an illegal motion penalty will be called.
- 18.4. Two players (not including the Center) need to be on the line of scrimmage. The other 4 must be off the line of scrimmage.
- 18.5. At least one player must line up to both the left and right of the Quarterback.
- 18.6. Motions are allowed with any one of the backs that are off the line of scrimmage.

## **19. Unsportsmanlike Conduct**

- 19.1. If a field monitor or referee witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, illegal blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the referee’s discretion. No appeals will be considered. FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!
- 19.2. Unsportsmanlike conduct following a TD will result in loss of the point after attempt, in addition to any ejections levied by the referee. Examples of unsportsmanlike conduct following a TD include excessive celebration and/or taunting/mockers players on the opposing team.
- 19.3. Offensive or confrontational language is illegal. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the

referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player(s) will be ejected from the game.

- 19.4. Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach or official. Any unsportsmanlike penalty against a player is subject to current or future game(s) dismissal.
- 19.5. Coaches may not physically or verbally abuse any player, opponent, coach or official. Any unsportsmanlike penalty against a coach is subject to current or future game(s) dismissal, and a meeting with the LWYS Board.
- 19.6. Ball carriers MUST make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.
- 19.7. Defenders are not allowed to run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
- 19.8. Any player or coach removed from a game will not be allowed to participate in the following game.
- 19.9. Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship, as well:
  - 19.9.1. Yell to cheer on your players, not to harass officials or other teams
  - 19.9.2. Keep comments clean and profanity free.
  - 19.9.3. Compliment ALL players, not just one child or team.
  - 19.9.4. Inappropriate comments by fans may result in a penalty, game(s) forfeiture, as well as expulsion from LWYS member status.
- 19.10. Fans are required to keep fields safe and kids friendly:
  - 19.10.1. Keep younger kids and equipment such as coolers, chairs and tents a minimum of 10 yards off the field on the upper field, and outside of the fencing on the lower field.

## 20. Penalties

- 20.1. The official will call all penalties.
- 20.2. Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
- 20.3. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted. (Spot fouls)
- 20.4. Only the head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification.
- 20.5. Games may not end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.
- 20.6. Penalties are assessed live ball then dead ball. Live ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered complete.
- 20.7. Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.
- 20.8. An inadvertent whistle will still result in a dead play and the ball will be spotted by the official where the runners feet are. If the player is behind the line of scrimmage the ball will be spotted at the line of scrimmage.
- 20.9. In the event of a dispute, a designated LWYS Board Member will adjudicate and render a final ruling.

### Defensive Penalties

Offside	+10 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down
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Illegal Rush	+10 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Illegal Flag Pull	+10 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Roughing the Passer	+10 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Taunting	+10 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Defensive Pass Interference	+10 yard from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Holding	Spot foul + 10 yards and automatic first down
Unnecessary Roughness	Spot foul +10 yards and automatic first down

### **Offensive Penalties**

Offsides/False Start	Loss of down
Illegal Forward Pass	-10 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Offensive Pass Interference	-10 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal Motion (more than one person moving)	-10 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Delay of Game	Loss of down
Unnecessary Roughness	Spot Foul, -10 yards and loss of down

**Note: An offensive penalty on 4<sup>th</sup> down will result in a change of possession.**

At the flyweight level, there will not be strict enforcement of the offsides and illegal motion penalties unless the occurrence is excessive. Enforcement will be based upon the discretion of the referees.