



**THE HUDSON VALLEY'S  
PREMIER SPORTS FACILITY**

**FLAG FOOTBALL RULES**

*Modified November 26, 2019*

RULE	MENS DIVISION	YOUTH DIVISION
Roster Size	Maximum 16	Maximum 16
Players per side on field	7	7
Field Size	30 x 60 yards	30 x 60 yards
Game Clock	(2) 25 minute halves	same
Amt of Ineligible Linemen	3	3
Flags for Linemen	NO	NO
Blocking Allowed	Open-Hand only	Open-Hand only: only lineman on the line of scrimmage
Pass rush at snap	Automatic/full	same
Fumbles/bad snaps	Dead where ball lands	same
First Downs	Every 20 Yards	same
Punts	No	No
Kicked FG/Extra point	No	No
Pats	Yes	Yes
Kick/Receive	20 yard line	same

**\*All players must be familiar with the boundaries of the playing field, walk off area, goals on and off the field, netting, bleachers, spectators, exit doors, and the dome perimeter. All players play at their own risk.**

## Overview of Game Structure

**Default:** When there is no HVFFL rule for a given situation, by default, NFL rules are used.

**Number of Players: Mens Division:** Seven players per team on the field.

### Field Dimensions:

**Mens Division:** Fields are 30 X 60 yards, with fixed first downs at each 20 yard line.

### Rushing the Quarterback:

**Mens Division:** Automatic rush at snap.

**Blitzing:** No Blitzing

### Blocking:

**Mens Division:** All blocking must be done with open hands only, at all times, everywhere on the field including the linemen. Open hands are to be thrust outward from the elbows, not up from the sides. All blocks must be between the waist and shoulders and not below the waist.

**Fumbles:** There are no fumble recoveries. The ball is always dead where and when it hits the ground. An incomplete lateral is a fumble. Fumbles and laterals may be caught in the air by either team and advanced. If a ball is fumbled from behind the line of scrimmage, in a forward direction and is caught by the team that fumbled, it's a forward pass. A ball fumbled from beyond the line of scrimmage, in a forward direction is spotted at the point of the initial fumble if not caught by the team not fumbling.

**Overtime:** No Overtimes permitted. Games can end in a tie

## The Clock

**Game Length:** Games consist of two twenty five-minute halves with a two-minute warning in each half. Half-time consists of five minutes.

**Two-Minute Warning:** A two-minute warning is given to both head coaches of a game when there is two minutes remaining in a half or immediately after the play if the two-minute point is reached during a play. The clock is stopped during the warning and starts at the next snap.

- 2 minutes left = Running Time
- Under 2 minutes = clock stopped for extra point attempts only

**Stopping the Clock:** Continues Running Clock. The clock stops at each two-minute warning for clock stoppages in the last two minutes of each half.

**Time Outs:** Each team receives three time outs per half, which cannot be carried over into the next half. Only two time outs can be utilized after the two-minute warning of a half.

**Time Between Plays:** The offensive team is allowed 25 seconds between plays including. The 25-second clock begins when the linesman sets the ball for the next play. The linesman will issue a 10-second warning. If not heeded, a "delay of game" penalty will be charged.

## Scoring

**Points:** A touchdown is worth six points. Safeties are worth two points. Extra points are worth one or two points for scoring on interceptions on extra points.

**Extra Points:** You may run or pass from the three yard line for one point, or run or pass from the 10 yard line for two points. Intercepted extra points (or kicked extra points caught by the defense) can be returned for two points in all divisions, regardless of the original line of scrimmage or how many points the offense was trying to score. If a team scores as time runs out, an extra point will only be attempted if it can affect who wins the game. If the extra point cannot affect who wins the game, then no extra point is attempted and the scoring team will receive one additional point.

**Mercy Rule:** The game will end if there is at least a 35-point spread at halftime or an 20-point spread with four minutes remaining in the end of the second half.

## Standings

Standings and scores will be posted each week on the Hudson Valley Sportsdome web-site. Standings are based on wins, loses, & ties. Tiebreaker: Head to Head, points against, points for, point differential, then a coin flip. A maximum of a 25-point spread will be permitted per game; a point spread greater than 25 will not be scored. A forfeit will be scored as 6-0

## Offense

**5 Yard No Run Zone:** No offensive running play is to take place within 5 yards of the end zone

**Carrying the Ball:** The ball-carrier may never: 1) flag shield (with hand or ball), 2) run directly into a defender (charge), 3) crawl, 4) dive to advance the ball, or 5) toss the ball in the air to avoid a flag pull while in possession of the ball (toss to self). A ball-carrier that falls or a receiver that dives to make a catch may get up and advance the ball unless one-hand touched by a defender before being on both feet again. **The stiff-arm is illegal.** Jumping over a fallen defender is legal.

### Formations:

**All Divisions:** The offense must have a minimum of three men on the line of scrimmage.

Offensive line must be balanced ( tkl – ctr – tkl), not more than 1 ft. apart, the ball must be snapped through the centers legs, and the offensive linemen are ineligible to catch passes, including laterals, unless tipped by a defensive player first (5 yd penalty). It's ineligible receiver downfield if an offensive lineman is more than three yards past the line of scrimmage on a pass play.

**Eligible Receivers:** everyone except the three linemen

**Passes:** Only one forward pass is allowed per play. A forward pass is a ball thrown or handed forward; overhand or otherwise. A lateral is a ball thrown parallel to the line of scrimmage or toward the offensive side of it; overhand or otherwise. A lateral is, by definition, not forward.

**Going Out of Bounds:** A player without the ball that steps out of bounds on his own is ineligible to re-enter during that play.

**Legal Catch:** A legal catch is defined the same as in the NFL. For a legal catch, the player must control the ball throughout the act of touching both feet, or any other part of the body except the hands, to the ground in bounds. If pushed out of bounds by a defender during the act of catching the ball, an official may rule that the player would've been in bounds without the contact and award a catch.

**Bad Snaps:** Snaps that hit the ground are considered fumbles and are dead where they land.

**Crack Back Blocking: NOT PERMITTED**

**Sleeper Plays:** To be eligible to participate in a given offensive play, a player must have been in the previous huddle (no sleeper plays) and no player changes can occur during a "hurry-up" offense. Sleeper plays are illegal.

**Tackle Eligible:** Not eligible.

**Center's Exchange:** The ball must be snapped through the center's legs. At that time, possession of the ball must be transferred from the center to another player (quarterback) and cannot remain with or come back to the center. The quarterback may then transfer possession of the ball to an eligible receiver as per rule 4.6. Note that this effectively makes illegal a center sneak and associated plays.

## Defense

**Rushing the Quarterback:**

**Formations:**

**All Divisions:** There must be three defensive linemen head-to-head with the offensive linemen. **These linemen may not drop back into pass coverage and must engage the head-up offensive linemen. They cannot move outside the head-to-head area, unless, the quarterback leaves the pocket or there is a run play.** No stunting is allowed.

**No four point stances are allowed.**

**Bumping Defenders:**

**Mens Division:** Each defender is allowed only one chuck of a receiver. A legal chuck (or bump) is with open hands between the waist and shoulders within the first five yards. The hands must be withdrawn after the initial contact.

**Pass Defense:** The defender cannot use contact to break up a pass play. It's pass interference to shield the receiver's eyes. The defender cannot deflag the receiver prior to the reception. After a pass is touched, contact can be made without pass interference being called. However, a pass may still not be broken-up with contact.

**Tackling:** Any tackle within 10 yards of the end zone will be judged a touchdown automatically unless other defenders are present to stop the ball-carrier.

**Pushing Out of Bounds:** Any push out of bounds within 10 yards of the end zone will be judged a touchdown automatically, unless other defenders are present to stop the ball-carrier.

**Free Blitz:** A free blitz is in effect when 1) the quarterback moves outside his tackles or 2) the ball is handed-off.

**Ball Retrieval:** The defense is responsible for retrieving the ball and bringing it back to the linesman after each play as fast as possible or a delay penalty will be charged.

**Defensive Audibles:** The defense is not allowed to simulate offensive calls by trying to sound like the quarterback. This includes, but is not limited to, saying such things as "hut-hut" or "go-go". This is called "Imitating the Offensive Calls".

**Equipment (Legal):** A properly inflated Wilson NFL game ball or HVFFL game ball are the only balls allowed to be used in the HVFFL. The Triple-Threat flag belt is the only flag belt allowed in HVFFL play or any other flag belt provided by the Hudson Valley Sportsdome. All jerseys must be 1) tucked in the pants/shorts, or 2) taped tightly above the flag belt and must end at least four inches above the flag belt. Anyone knotting the flag belt will be ejected from the game. Triple-Threat flag belts may not match pants or shorts in color. All players must wear mouthguards. Athletic cups are strongly recommended for all players.

**Equipment (Illegal):** No football pads, no cleats or casts allowed. Knee braces must be padded with slow to recover foam, not just pants.

**No (or Hidden) Flag belt:** If the ball-carrier has no flag belt, or loses his flag belt without it being pulled, one-hand touch prevails. If the ball-carrier loses his flag belt because of a defender (flag belt clip separates), the play is dead at the point where the clip separated. If during the play, the ball-carrier's jersey covers the flags and the defense cannot with ordinary effort pull the flag, one hand touch prevails.

**Spot of Ball:** The ball is spotted at the location of the flag clip upon separation at the time of the flag pull. The exception is if the ball carrier is on the ground. In this case, the ball is spotted where it is when the ball-carrier is downed. See rule 4.1 for diving to advance the ball.

**Team Area:** No player or coach is allowed to leave the area bounded by the sidelines and the 20 yard markers. Coaches are responsible for keeping all players a minimum of two yards off the sideline and all spectators a minimum of five yards off the sideline. If the coach crosses the sideline onto the playing field, a time out will be charged. If a time-out is not available a fifteen yard penalty will be enforced (illegal participation).

**Refunds:** No refunds are given after registration. There are no refunds for players or teams removed from the league for ineligibility or disciplinary reasons.

**Jerseys:** All teams must have numbered jerseys matching in color. Any player that doesn't, cannot play (players may alternate jerseys to qualify). Team jerseys must be exactly the same except for the value of the number and the player's name (if any). For example, any stripes, sponsor's names, colors and other items must be exactly the same. The player's names and numbers must match in color but the names and numbers themselves will be different.

## Pregame Information

**Forfeits (Enforcement):** If the minimum number of players is not present 15 minutes after the scheduled start time a forfeit is declared. If players arrive late but before the forfeit time the time spent waiting is deducted from the first half, the team on time wins the toss, a 15 yard personal foul is assessed on the kickoff against the late team, and the team on time receives the ball at the beginning of the second half. An official will give a five-minute warning before time is deducted. The forfeit time is 15 minutes from the scheduled starting time, even if the previous game ends late. If one team plays with less than the maximum amount of players, the other team may play with more than them, up to the maximum amount.

**Forfeits (Result):** In the case of a forfeit, the forfeiting team takes a 0-6 loss. After two forfeits, a team is automatically out of the league.

**Game Rescheduling:** The team requesting that a game be rescheduled must pay a \$50 rescheduling fee, to be paid prior to the next game (if opposing team agrees to a reschedule).

**Toss of the Coin:** The team that wins the toss can choose 1) to receive 2) to kickoff, 3) direction, or 4) to defer their choice to the second half. The team not choosing for the first half will choose for the second. Note that teams do not automatically change direction at halftime.

## Rosters

**Roster Limitations:** The maximum roster is 16 for all Divisions. Players may be added to the roster until the end of the third game. Coach/Captain is responsible for notifying HV Sportsdome of any roster changes.

**Waivers:** All adults must sign a waiver and release of liability prior to participation in any HVFFL game. All players under age 18 must also have a waiver signed by a parent or guardian prior to participation.

**PICTURE ID:** All players new to the facility must have their photo taken at the Front Desk and provide age verification (Driver's license, passport, etc) prior to entering the Dome.

**Player Limitations:** Once a player has been placed on a roster for a team, he is bound to that team for the remainder of the season unless his present coach agrees (in writing) to release him. No released player can join a team more than one division lower than his previous level. Players may never change teams after the third game. No player can belong to two teams, regardless of what division he's in.

**Mens Divisions:** No one under age 18 may play in Mens A Division. Age 16 and older may play in Mens B Division.

## Penalties

**Enforcement Notes:** When penalty yardage exceeds more than 50% of remaining yardage to the goal line, the ball is spotted half the distance to the goal line. For a defensive penalty during a score, enforcement is on the kickoff. If both teams commit a penalty on the same play, the play is run over (this is called off-setting penalties). If one team commits multiple fouls on same play, only largest single foul is enforced. In addition, all personal fouls are always enforced. Spiking the ball in celebration is not a penalty unless it is done in an unsportsmanlike manner, in which case it is a personal foul assessed on the kickoff. Any spot foul committed by the offense in the end zone is a safety.

**Voluntary Penalties:** If the offense begins a possession five or less yards before the next first down, the defense can voluntarily be penalized five yards by telling an official before the snap. This penalty against the defense cannot be refused.

**Unnecessary Roughness:** Any infraction in flag football that is deemed potentially hazardous by an official can be elevated to unnecessary roughness which is a personal foul and can include ejection.

**Spot Fouls:** These penalties are presumed to end or prolong a play illegally. Therefore, the play counts up to the point of the infraction and enforcement of the penalty requires assessment of yardage from the spot of the foul. An example is tackling, in which case, the play would've continued except for the tackle. If the offense earns a first down, but enforcement of a spot foul brings the ball back over the first down line, they still have the first down. But to earn another first down, they must cross the line they would've needed to cross had there been no penalty. If a defense in possession of the ball or a return team commits this type of foul and enforcement of the foul brings the ball back over a first down line, they have first down and must cross the nearest marker to earn another first down.

**Drawing Offside:** Defenders are not allowed to attempt to draw offensive players offside or attempt to make offensive linemen move with sound or movement.

The Ball Carrier may never.

1. Flag Shield
2. run directly into a defender (charging)
3. crawl, or
4. dive to advance the ball. All are 5 yards from the spot & loss of down

A receiver must have both feet in bounds for a legal catch.

To be eligible, a player must have been in the previous huddle (no Sleeper plays) and no player changes can occur during a hurry-up offense 5 yards repeat down.

**The stiff-arm is illegal.**

Inadvertent whistles: Offense has the choice of ground gained or play over. If defense is in possession, the ball is dead at spot.

No tackling (10 yards additional). Any tackle within 10 yards of the end zone will be judged a TD automatically unless other defenders are present to make a play.

No pushing out of bounds- 1<sup>st</sup> down & 10 yards. Any push within 10 yards of the end zone will be judged a TD automatically unless other defenders are present to make a play.

**Pass Defense: Mens Division:** Pass defense is allowed only one chuck of the receiver within the first 5 yards. The defender cannot use contact to break up a pass play- 1<sup>st</sup> down 5 yards. The defender cannot shield the receivers' eyes (pass interference). The defender cannot de-flag the receiver prior to the reception- additional 10 yards. (5 yards from line of scrimmage on incomplete pass.)

No ball stripping- personal foul, 10 yards

Any personal foul against the defense- 1<sup>st</sup> down & 10 yards

Anything exceeding incidental contact with the QB will be judged roughing the passer- personal foul, 10 yards & 1<sup>st</sup> down.

Any infraction in flag football that is deemed potentially hazardous can be elevated to the catch all Unnecessary Roughness. This is a Referee option call which can lead to a 10 yard personal or even ejection.

5 yard penalties: illegally worn equipment, delay of game, too many players on the field, not enough players on the line, off-sides, false start, encroachment, illegal procedure, illegal formation, illegal motion, illegal forward pass, intentional grounding (marked from spot of pass & loss of down), helping runner, illegal sleeper/tackle eligible, offensive or defensive holding, ineligible receiver, offensive pass interference, illegal contact on receiver, flag shielding, diving, obstruction of ball carrier, 10 yard penalties: unnecessary roughness, personal fouls, spitting, clipping, ball-stripping, other than –hand blocking, tackle, illegal stiff arm, charging, illegal flag pull, & fight initiating team.

Pass interference- 1 down at the spot

Enforcement of penalties:

1. Roughing the passer- yards added on to complete pass or line of scrimmage incomplete.
2. All basic scrimmage penalties are to be marked from previous spot, excluding spot fouls such as flag shielding, charging, pass interference, clipping, and intentional grounding.
3. Half the distance is marked when penalty yardage exceeds more than 50% of remaining yardage to the goal line.
4. Penalty during score- marked off on next play
5. Off setting penalties- play over

## Personal Behavior

It is the responsibility of the coaches/captains and players to know and follow the rules as stated herein.

### Yellow & Red Cards

A player, coach, or spectator may receive a yellow or red card before, during, and after the game.

A warning (Yellow Card) or an Ejection (Red Card) may be issued by an official to any player or coach, at any time, who conducts himself in an unsportsmanlike manner or is involved in unnecessary roughness.

A player receiving a Yellow Card must leave the field for at least one series of downs and up to 5 minutes of game time (referees' discretion).

Two warnings/Two Yellow Cards = a Red Card. A Red Card will result in an immediate ejection from the game and a one-game suspension. Any player or coach receiving a Red Card for violent conduct, serious foul play, foul or abusive language, will be immediately ejected from the game and must immediately leave the property. Receiving a Red Card may result in further game/season suspension based on the violation. Hudson Valley Sportsdome management will make the final decision; coach/captain will be contacted on suspension duration.

**A Team cannot substitute in a player for the suspended player; team must play a man down.**

Any player receiving a red card for Violent Conduct/Serious Foul Play/Foul or Abusive Language will sit out the next scheduled game, will be fined \$50, and may result in further game/season suspension based on the violation. Fine must be paid prior to their next game.

Any player accumulating 4 Yellow Cards in one session will be subject to suspension from the Hudson Valley Sportsdome league. Any player accumulating 2 Red Cards in any 12-month period will be subject to suspension from the Hudson Valley Sportsdome league. No refunds will be issued.

**Unrostered Players:** All team coaches are responsible for ensuring that all players are listed on the official roster and giving the updated roster to the Hudson Valley Sportsdome's management. All rosters are frozen after the third game. If a team captain suspects that an unrostered player is on the field during a game he must bring his allegation to the attention of the referee immediately. If the allegation is made during the first half, the game will continue until the end of the half; if the allegation is made during the second half, the game will continue until the end of the game. At that time the referee will make a determination. If an unrostered player is discovered his team forfeits the game.

**Treatment of Officials and Commissioner:** Any coach, player or spectator that curses at an official or the commissioner will be ejected. The following behaviors on the part of any coach, player or spectator will result in suspension or ejection from the league and facility: 1) telephoning or confronting an official at his home or work (excluding head coaches calling the head official of the league), 2) threatening or touching an official, or 3) verbally or physically attacking an official (including racial or religious remarks). Additionally, charges will be pressed with the police if applicable. The above behaviors (except phone calls) are prohibited within the confines of the entire facility, including the parking lot.

**Treatment of Coaches and Players:** Shoving and verbal challenges during a game will result in a personal foul penalty. Profanity on the field or sideline will result in a personal foul without warning. Two personal fouls (live or dead ball) by the same player require that player to be automatically ejected from the game. Two fight suspensions result in that player's expulsion from the league for the remainder of the season. Physical or verbal attacks (including racial or religious remarks) may result in suspension or ejection from the league for an indefinite time.

**Suspensions:** If a player or coach is suspended or expelled from the league for any reason, he may not attend the games he is suspended from.

**Fighting:** Any form of fighting and physical altercations will result in immediate ejection from the game and league suspension up to and including lifetime suspension and/or legal charges. Hudson Valley Sportsdome Management will make the final decision.

Failure to act as prescribed will result in your removal as coach. If your sideline empties out onto the field, the game may be ended. Bench Clearing may result in a player or team expulsion for the session. Teammates fighting with each other may be suspended. No refunds will be issued.

a. **Fighting is a flagrant act that can occur when the ball is live or dead.**

b. **Includes, but is not limited to:**

1. **An attempt to strike an opponent with the fist, hands, arms, legs or feet.**

2. **An attempt to punch or kick an opponent regardless of whether or not contact is made.**

3. **Attempting to instigate a fight by committing an unsportsmanlike act toward an opponent that causes the opponent to retaliate by fighting.**

**Unsportsmanlike Conduct:** Unsportsmanlike actions before, during or after games may result in suspension from the league up to and including lifetime suspension and /or legal charges. Hudson Valley Sportsdome Management will make the final decision.

## **ELASTIC POWER:**

The Hudson Valley Sportsdome reserves the right to establish guidelines for any and all rules or infractions not covered in the league rules and to refuse participation to any individual or coach if they do not obey the rules and regulations and keep within the spirit of sportsmanship.

## **COMMENTS OF THE RULES:**

These rules are intended to create a balance of play; to create an atmosphere of sportsmanship and fair play; and to emphasize cleverness and skill without limiting freedom of individuals or team play. It is important to know the intent and purpose of a rule so that it may be intelligently applied in each play situation. A player or team should not be permitted an advantage which is not intended by a rule. Play will not be permitted to develop which may lead to placing a player at a disadvantage not intended by the rule.