



**"And you must love the Lord
your God with all your heart,
all your soul, all your mind,
and all your strength."**

Mark 12:30 (NLT)

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Rules To Upward Flag Football

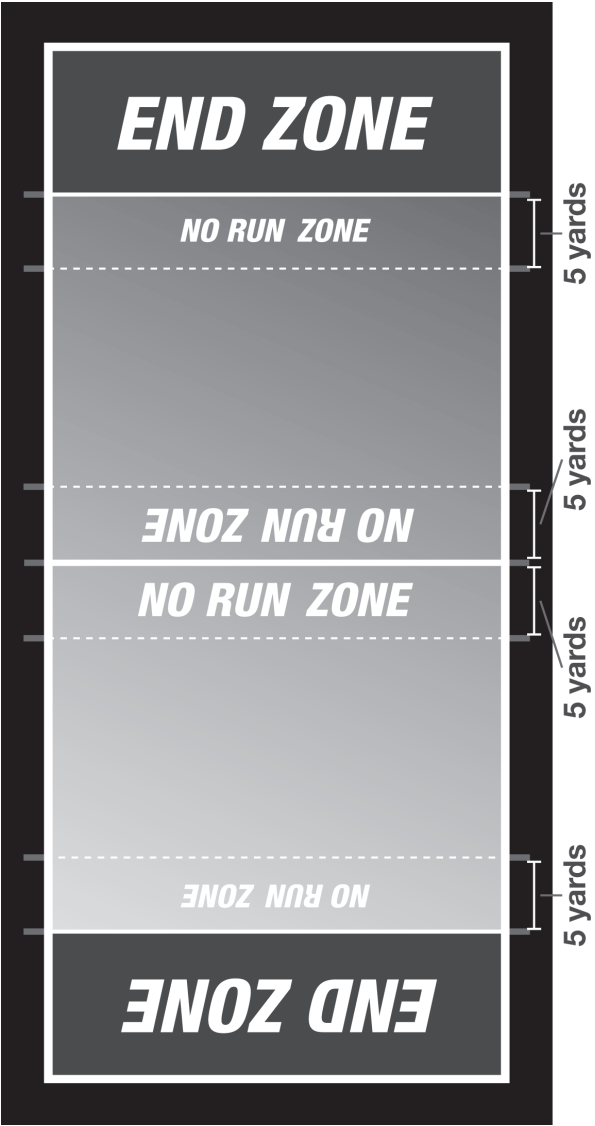
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The rules of Upward Flag Football are designed to promote healthy competition and sportsmanship while teaching the objectives of the game.

Field Diagram and Format

- › The offensive team is awarded a first down when it crosses the midfield line. Based on the field size, one first down is sufficient to advance the football for a score.
- › The lines 5 yards from each end zone and on both sides of the midfield line are no-run zones. No-run zones do not apply to the K5 division. The no-run zones are designed to take away power-running plays.
- › If an offensive team picks up a first down by crossing midfield but is then pushed back into the no-run zone, the no-run zone will not apply, and the offensive team cannot pick up another first down.
- › If an offensive team is in the no-run zone which applies to them and loses yardage due to a penalty or any play (for example, taking a knee, running out of bounds, negative yardage play), they are still considered as being in the no-run zone.
- › If an offensive team is attempting an extra point from the 5-yard line (pass only) and is penalized, they are still only able to attempt an extra point with a pass for one point. If an offensive team is attempting an extra point from the 10-yard line (run or pass) and the defense is penalized, the offense is still able to run or pass for two points.
- › As there are no kickoffs, the offensive team begins the game and second half by taking possession of the ball at its 5-yard line.



Down Format

K5 and 1st-2nd Grades

- › The offensive team has four downs to gain a first down by crossing midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has four downs to score a touchdown.
- › If the team fails to cross midfield in four downs or score a touchdown, the other team takes possession on its own 5-yard line. There will be no punts for this division. All four downs will be used without the concern of giving up field position.

3rd Grade and Up

- › The offensive team has four downs to gain a first down by crossing midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has four downs to score a touchdown.
- › On fourth down, a team has two options:
 - A team may attempt to gain a first down or a touchdown. If a team fails to convert on fourth down, either by scoring or picking up a first down, the ball changes possession at the no-run zone before midfield going into the first down.
 - A team may “punt” as its fourth-down play by notifying the referee. In this case, the ball will be placed on the opposing team’s 5-yard line, and there will be a change of possession.

Offensive starting points

(K5-2nd Grades)

| SITUATION | STARTING FIELD POSITION AFTER CHANGE OF POSSESSION |
|--|--|
| After a touchdown and extra-point(s) attempt | Offense's 5-yard line |
| After a turnover on downs | Offense's 5-yard line |
| After an interception | At the spot of the tackle if there is not a score |

(3rd Grade and Up)

| SITUATION | STARTING FIELD POSITION AFTER CHANGE OF POSSESSION |
|--|---|
| After a touchdown and extra-point(s) attempt | Offense's 5-yard line |
| After a "punt" | Offense's 5-yard line |
| After a turnover on downs | No-run zone going into the first down (midfield line) |
| After an interception | At the spot of the tackle if there is not a score |

Clock Format

- › Games consist of four 9-minute quarters with an 8-minute halftime.
- › The game clock stops briefly at the end of every quarter for predetermined substitutions.
- › Each team has one 30-second timeout per half. Unused timeouts do not carry over to the second half. The clock will stop during the timeout.
- › A 30-second play clock begins after the referee spots the ball as ready for play.
- › The clock will stop in the final minute of the first half and in the final minute of the game for the following situations:
 - After an incomplete pass
 - After the ball carrier goes out of bounds
 - After a touchdown
 - During an extra-point attempt
 - For an official's timeout
 - At the conclusion of the interception return
 - During a called timeout until the ball is snapped
 - On a change of possession
 - For a penalty. Keep in mind the half or game may not end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines the penalty.

Game Format

Upward Flag Football leagues feature an enhanced game format.

- › Referees lead both teams in prayer at midfield before every game. This is a good time to give reminders about the game and to check that flags are on hips, jerseys are tucked in, jewelry has been removed, and coaches have their substitutions ready for the game.

- › The visiting team calls the coin toss. The team that wins the coin toss may choose to play offense or defense first or choose which goal to defend. The other team has the choice (possession or end to defend) not made by the team winning the toss. The team that plays defense first will play offense to start the second half.
- › Because the end of a quarter does not signal a change of possession, the team with possession at the end of the first and third quarters will retain possession after substitutions take place.
- › Teams will switch ends of the field at the half, not after each quarter.
- › Upward Sports recommends six players on the field per team, but numbers can be adjusted based upon the size of your league. Six players equips the offense with an appropriate amount of players without crowding the field.
- › Coaches are allowed to walk the sidelines and encourage their players without stepping in the playing area.
- › In the 3rd grade and up divisions, each team can put one coach in the huddle for the first two games of the season. In any 2nd grade and under division, each team can put one coach in the huddle throughout the season.
- › Teams will use substitution rules, as detailed below.

Substitutions

Upward Sports' substitution system is designed to provide each player equal opportunity for improvement. The system ensures that:

- › No player sits out more than one possession at a time.

- › Every player plays offense and defense in every game.
- › Every player will start on either offense or defense in each game.
- › In most cases, each player will play against someone of equal ability.
- › Coaches do not have to monitor playing time for each player.
- › Playing time for all players is virtually even over the course of the season.

Scoring

- › Touchdown: 6 points
- › Extra point: 1 point (played from the 5-yard line, no-run zone with a pass) or 2 points (played from the 10-yard line with a run or pass)
- › Safety: 2 points. The scoring team will also receive possession on its own 5-yard line. No physical kicks will occur in Upward Flag Football.

Offensive Basics

- › A minimum of three players must be on the line of scrimmage at every snap. Traditional football format requires seven players on the line of scrimmage at the snap of the ball. The three players on the line for Upward Flag Football will consist of a center and two receivers positioned anywhere along the line of scrimmage. This adds some structure to offensive sets.
- › Only one player can be in motion when the ball is snapped. This is intact to keep the integrity of the game.
- › In the 3rd grade and up divisions, the ball

is snapped between the legs to begin play. In any division 2nd grade and under, players may use the side snap. The traditional snap can be difficult for the younger players with small hands.

- › Before handing off or passing, the quarterback must have complete, unshared possession of the ball. This also helps clarify the center sneak play. A possession change between the center and quarterback must occur in order to run a play.
- › Low-profile field cones or beanbags are used to designate the line of scrimmage and the 10-yard rush line for the defense.

Running the Football

- › The quarterback cannot advance the ball across the line of scrimmage. However, they may scramble behind the line of scrimmage. This is in place to include others in each offensive play. Without this rule, a quarterback could dominate each play by advancing the football.
- › The person who receives the snap from the center (under-center or shot-gun) is considered the quarterback.
- › Direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are legal. Multiple handoffs may be used. After the ball crosses the line of scrimmage, handoffs and underhand or overhand forward or backward passes are not permitted.
- › The 5 yards leading toward the goal line and the 5 yards leading to the midfield first-down line are no-run zones. The no-run zones do not apply to the K5 division.
- › A player receiving a handoff or backward pass can pass the ball forward from behind the line of scrimmage.

- › A ball carrier may not dive. A dive will result in a penalty. This is for safety and abides with the no contact rule.
- › The ball carrier's feet determine the spot of the football when a flag is pulled, not the location of the football. This is to discourage a dive for advancement.
- › If a ball carrier who has established possession of the ball fumbles the ball into an opposing player's hands without the ball touching the ground, the play is considered a fumble. This is a dead ball at the spot where the player lost the ball. If a ball carrier attempts a legal or illegal pass and the hand and arm are coming forward, it is ruled as a pass and, therefore, an interception.

Receiving the Football

- › All six players are eligible to receive passes. (The quarterback becomes eligible after a handoff or backward pass.) With the no-contact rule, no blockers can be used thus, allowing all offensive players to be eligible.
- › A completion consists of a receiver gaining control of the football in bounds while having at least one foot touch in bounds before stepping out of bounds. This rule is to keep the integrity of the game.
- › If a player catches a pass and any part of their body other than their feet or hands is touching the ground, the play is blown dead, and the ball is spotted at the point of completion.
- › Simultaneous possession by an offensive and defensive player is awarded to the offensive player.

Passing the Football

- › A forward pass can be completed behind or beyond the line of scrimmage. Only one

forward pass can be completed per play. However, while in the no-run zone, only a forward pass caught beyond the line of scrimmage can advance the ball out of the no-run zone.

- › A backward pass can only be executed by the quarterback.
 - A backward pass can only occur while behind the line of scrimmage and only one completed per play.
 - A backward pass (over or underhand) includes a pass from the quarterback that travels parallel to the line of scrimmage or away from the end zone where the offense is attempting to score.
 - An incomplete backward pass is a fumble and a dead ball where it first hits the ground or where it travels out of bounds before hitting the ground.
- › Once the ball leaves the quarterback's hand, the defender can make a play on the ball. The defender must avoid contact with the receiver.
- › The quarterback has 7 seconds to throw a pass. If a pass is not thrown within 7 seconds, it is treated as an incomplete pass (loss of down). A handoff or pass will end the 7-second pass count. This rule keeps a scrambling quarterback from taking too much time behind the line of scrimmage with each possession.

Dead Balls

Play is ruled dead when one of the following occurs:

- › The ball carrier's flag is pulled or falls out.
- › A player establishes possession of the ball after their flag has fallen out on its own.
- › The ball carrier steps out of bounds.

Rushing the Passer and the Rush Line

- › All players who are rushing the quarterback must begin 10 yards from the line of scrimmage. Before each snap, the referee will designate the 10-yard rush line with a small beanbag or low profile cone. The rush line extends in a straight line from sideline to sideline. With no blocking allowed, this gives the quarterback enough time to make a play or escape a rush.
 - A league director may adjust the distance of the rush line to any division.
- › With the 3rd grade and up divisions, any number of players may rush the quarterback. Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grade divisions may only rush one defender.
- › Defenders not rushing the quarterback may line up on or off the line of scrimmage. In the K5 division, three defenders must line up 10 yards from the line of scrimmage. Having three players line up 10 yards from the line of scrimmage for the K5 group keeps the congestion from forming along the line of scrimmage. This is key since a majority of K5 plays are running plays.
- › Once the ball leaves the quarterback's hand, the 10-yard rule is no longer in effect, and all defenders may cross the line of scrimmage to pursue the ball carrier. This allows the defense to react quickly to a play behind the line of scrimmage.

Rule Adjustments by Division

| RULE | K5 | 1ST AND 2ND GRADE | 3RD AND 4TH GRADE | 5TH GRADE AND UP |
|--|------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| NO-RUN ZONES APPLY | NO | YES | YES | YES |
| OPTION TO PUNT | NO | NO | YES | YES |
| COACH IN HUDDLE | ALL SEASON | ALL SEASON | GAMES 1, 2 | GAMES 1, 2 |
| DEFENDERS ALLOWED AT LINE OF SCRIMMAGE | 3 | 3 | ALL | ALL |
| NUMBER OF RUSHERS ALLOWED | 1 | 1 | ALL | ALL |
| SIDE SNAP ALLOWED | YES | YES | NO | NO |