

FLAG FOOTBALL

Unit Overview and Organization

Flag football is a game that resembles professional or collegiate football without the physical contact or equipment. Teams are made up of nine players each. Each team will consist of (5) players on the line and (4) players in the backfield including the quarterback. This number may be adjusted depending on the number of students in class. The object of the game is to score touchdowns by running or completing a forward pass over the opponent's goal line.

HISTORY

The origin of the game of football is somewhat in doubt. There are references in history to a form of the game being played in ancient Greece. Football as played in the United States today is a blend of soccer and rugby. The sport likely has some roots in England because of those sports popularity there. Once established in America the sport continued evolving further to separate it from the other two sports. By 1860 football was played in an organized fashion in the Boston area. The first intercollegiate game of record was between Princeton and Rutgers in 1869. This was the beginning of football in the modern era.

Football, as we know it today, can trace its "roots" back thousands of years to ancient Greece. From there, the game spread to nearly every corner of the earth, to nearly every known civilization. The games usually took a form more akin to soccer than to American football. But all that changed one November day in 1823 at England's tradition-steeped Rugby School. A plaque tells the story: This stone commemorates the exploit of William Webb Ellis who with a fine disregard of the rules of football, as played at the time, first took the ball and ran with it.

Running with the football was not covered in the rules. But the English preppies, rather liking what Master Ellis did, continued to allow the practice, and a game - named after the school at which it was founded - was born. The Rugby game eventually emigrated to North America and evolved into football as played today in the United States. In actuality, the game recognized as the first college football contest - Princeton versus Rutgers, November 6, 1869 - resembled rugby more than football. With the setting down of football rules in 1876 came plays, formations, and strategy. Because there was no forward passing, all backfield men were running backs.

The Wedge: The first great tactical weapon in American football evolved into the fearsome "flying wedge" that was outlawed. The very first formation - evolving after the "mass" or "wedges" - was the T-formation. With only slight modifications, it can be seen today. What Amos Alonzo Stagg used at the University of Chicago in the 1890s is today's Tight-T or Full-House-T. One aspect that differed from the old to the modern formation was that in the early days, not only could all the backs run with the ball, but ends, tackles, guards, and centers, could - and would - carry the ball. The linemen simply took a step into the backfield, got a hand-off from the quarterback, and headed for the designated point of attack - usually behind an eight-man wave of blockers. By the turn of the century, however, there were rules enacted to clarify who could carry the ball and against massed interference, which often led to uncommon violence. In the early T, the quarterback was the signal-caller and the man who handed off to the other backs. Because each of the three remaining backs had specific duties, each had a different designation. The left halfback was a primary runner. The right halfback was a primary blocker. The fullback usually was a power runner

and blocker. This was the case in both the T and the Single Wing, which came into being shortly after the turn of the century. Early T-Formation: Reforms of wedge, such as requiring seven men on line of scrimmage, spawned a new formation - the T. While the left halfback and the right halfback had different designations in the Single Wing (in the Single Wing, the left halfback was called a tailback, and the right halfback was called a wingback), their responsibilities were about the same in both formations. The tailback was the main man in the Single Wing. He got the ball most of the time on a direct snap from center, was the heavy-duty runner, and, ideally at least, an adequate passer and kicker. The wingback was stationed outside the right end, and was used mostly for blocking. He ran an occasional inside reverse. The fullback continued to furnish blocking and power running, while the quarterback also evolved into a blocker. Single Wing: A power formation, with double-team blocking, pulling guards, and little deception, it was in fashion into the 1940s. Most teams that used the formation did little passing. Forward passing was legalized in 1906, but there were rules - in addition to the balloon-like ball itself - that tended to keep football a running game. Well into the 1920s, a second incomplete pass in a series would result in a loss of down and a five-yard penalty. Another rule provided for giving the ball to the opponent if an incomplete pass went out of bounds. Also, the opponent was awarded a touchback - and the ball on the 20-yard line - if a pass were incomplete in the end zone. Passing was only moderately popular in the early years of the NFL, mainly as practiced by coach Earl (Curly)

Lambeau's Green Bay Packers with Arnie Herber and Cecil Isbell throwing to Don Hutson in the 1930s and early 1940s. But the rules of the game forced most teams to run, and some became very proficient at it.

Class expectations

- *Performs the fundamental skills of football
- *Develops an appreciation of the game through games in class.
- *Understands rules and terminology that apply to this unit.
- *Gains an appreciation of the sport through classroom games.

Safety Concerns

- ❖ There are a number of precautions to be enforced for a safe class environment.
- ❖ No intentional contact between players (tackling, or attempting to run over)
- ❖ No player may use abusive or insulting language
- ❖ No player should be allowed to dive for an opponents flag or for a first down.
- ❖ No player should have on any jewelry, watches, etc..
- ❖ Flags shall not be worn illegally, but in a way that they are easily pulled.

Care of Equipment

- Flags must be returned to their appropriate colored rings and may not be tied or covered during play.
- Footballs for freshman and sophomore levels are junior size.
- Junior and senior classes use regulation size.
- Rubber kicking tees must be returned to the mesh storage bags

Techniques

Passing

1. To grip the ball you should have your finger tips over the strings toward the back end of the ball
2. Legs shoulder width apart with lead leg pointing in direction of throw.
3. Use both hands while bringing ball up by ear to begin throw.
4. Lead leg steps toward the target. Weak arm also points toward target as throwing arm begins motion.
5. In delivery, the ball should rotate off the palm to fingertips to give it the spiral motion
6. Follow through is like a baseball throw. Palm turns toward ground after release.

Receiving

Catching a pass chest high or above facing the quarterback will be taught with the triangle technique. This involves making a triangle by connecting the thumbs and index fingers. Students should watch the point of the ball come into the triangle then squeeze hands around the ball. Upon catching the ball it should be tucked quickly under the arm covering the tip. Catching the ball that is low or over the shoulder will be done with a different technique. Hands should be open with fingers spread, and pinkies together. Squeeze ball upon contact, tuck and cover tip. In catching the ball with either technique use of hands is most important. We do not want to catch the ball against the body. The ball then has a chance of bouncing away from the receiver.

Punting

1. Punting is one of the more difficult skills to master in football. It requires the most amount of coordination and timing.
2. Short step forward with kicking leg while holding ball in front.
3. Full step with opposite foot, begin to drop ball.
4. As opposite leg plants ball is dropped and kicking leg begins motion.
5. The drop is very important and must be placed so that the kicker does not lose the momentum of the approach.
6. On follow through kicking leg is fully extended while players on the toes of the plant foot.

The punter should hit the ball on the outside of his instep. Toes should be pointed down as ball impacts kicking foot. In learning to punt, the steps, drop, contact, and follow through need to be emphasized before worrying about distance.

Place Kicking

Kicking tee:

The tee should be used to support the ball for the kicker. It is designed so that the kickers foot can get under the ball creating more loft.

Straight on kick

In this style the kicker lines up about five yards behind the ball, directly in line with the ball and tee. Strides should be measured out so that your plant foot is in line with the ball as you begin to kick. The ball is struck at the lower half of the ball with the end of the toe. Your head should stay focused on the ball and tee until after contact. Kicking foot should follow through after impact.

Soccer style kick

With the soccer style kick there are a few differences in the approach and contact from the straight on style. When you begin your approach you should start about five yards back, and two yards to the side away from your kicking foot. You will approach the ball on an angle. Place your plant foot even with the ball and tee. Striking the ball will be with the inside of your foot. Head should stay focused on the ball and tee, and kicking leg will follow through after impact.

On follow through kicking leg is fully extended while players on the toes of the plant foot. The punter should hit the ball on the outside of his instep. Toes should be pointed down as ball impacts kicking foot. In learning to punt, the steps, drop, contact, and follow through need to be emphasized before worrying about distance.

Rules

Players: Official game calls for 9 players on a team. Number may be adjusted depending on your class size and ability.

Offense- There is no restriction on eligibility of receivers. Any player may go out for a pass.

Defense- Players rushing the quarterback must use a five second count before rushing. It is an offside penalty to rush before five seconds.

Equipment Flags are of the belt variety and detach completely from the player when pulled. This should eliminate arguing over flags being pulled. They should not be covered by your shirt or tied at all.

Balls are in two different sizes. Youth size will be used for Frosh-Soph and the regulation size for the Junior/Senior.

Field Terms

Endzone

Sideline

Endline

Goal line

First down line

Play Game will begin with a kickoff, but we will not use the kickoff after touchdowns. This is to keep the class active and not waiting for kickoffs to be completed. After a score the new offensive team will begin from 10 yds. in front of their end zone.

First Downs each team will have the opportunity to get 1 first down at midfield. After midfield they have four downs to score.

Fumbles are a dead ball. We do not want anyone injuring themselves by diving on a ball or colliding with someone else.

Offensive play teams may advance the ball by passing or by a rushing play. If it is a hand off to another player the defense does not need to count before coming in.

Defensive play to down a player the defense must remove the flag belt from the ball carrier or receiver.

Offensive and defensive players need to avoid contact with the opposition. A ball carrier may not run over a would be tackler, and a defender may not tackle the player and then grab the flag. These actions will result in unsportsmanlike penalties.

Line of scrimmage or neutral zone will divide the two teams before the ball is snapped.

Blocking will occur with the hands and arms in contact with the body. Their object is to force the defense around them not to block them physically.

Punting may be done on a fourth down if they have not crossed mid-field. Once they have obtained a first down at midfield they may not punt. A punt must be fielded cleanly and in the air to be returned. If it is dropped or goes out of bounds, offense begins at that spot. If it hits the ground before being fielded it is dead at that spot it hit not rolled.

Scoring

Touchdown equals 7 points, and there are no extra point conversions.

Safety can be earned by pulling the offensive players flag behind their own goal line. 2 points.

Penalties

Penalties Loss of down for the offensive penalty. Down goes over for the defensive penalty. Each team will have the option of declining the penalty if the plays yardage is better than the penalty. Some of the common penalties called:

- Off-sides
- Holding
- Passed ball over line of scrimmage
- Excessive contact
- Illegal use of the hands
- Pass interference
- Unnecessary roughness
- Unsportsmanlike conduct
- Delay of game

Terminology

Touchdown - most common method of scoring, and is worth 7 pts. for flag football.

Safety - pulling the flag of an offensive player behind their own goal line scoring 2 pts.

Offense - team putting the ball in play.

Defense - team trying to prevent the offensive team from scoring.

Dead ball - in flag football a deadball occurs when: the ball hits the ground on a punt or kick, a player falls down, a fumble occurs, any out of bounds play, and in an incomplete pass. No fumble can be picked up and advanced.

Line of scrimmage - imaginary line running parallel with the goal line that divides the offensive and defensive teams before the snap of the ball.

Neutral zone - 1 yd. Space between the two teams before play is begun, and separated by the line of scrimmage.

Touchback a ball caught in your own end zone from a kickoff, interception or punt that is downed. The ball is then brought out to the 10 yd. line in flag football.

Down - unit of play in football beginning from the snap of the ball until that play finishes.

First down - teams receive four downs to cross midfield and obtain a first down. In flag football you may only obtain one first down.

Blocking - act of protecting your ball carrier or quarterback by getting in the way of the defender. In flag football you must have your hands and arms in contact with your body.

Penalties - an act that is against the rules and results in loss of down or down over in flag football. All penalties in flag football are included to reduce injuries in class. Diving for flags is not permitted for that purpose. Double penalties offset each other resulting in a down over.

Forward pass - a forward pass may be thrown by any player that is behind the line of scrimmage at the time of the throw. Only one forward pass per downs is allowed.

Lateral pass - a pass that is thrown to a player behind you. This pass can be thrown from anywhere on the field as long as it is not to someone in front of you.

Zone defense - being responsible for an area until ball is in the air.

Man to Man - being responsible for one man until ball is in the air.