

GMAA FLAG FOOTBALL

General Rules

Section 1: Uniforms and equipment:

Duties of the Host School

Host school must provide safety pads for the goal posts which can be properly secured. No game may begin unless these pads are in place. Penalty is default of game.

Equipment - Jewelry must be removed prior to the start of the game. If it is not possible to remove the jewelry it must be covered up completely. Medical bracelets may be worn but they must be fastened securely so as not to cause injury. The Referee will have the final decision as to the acceptability of equipment.

Spikes or similar sharp pointed type shoes such as track spikes, metal baseball cleats or golf shoes are not permitted. If cleats are worn, there is no minimum or maximum number of cleats to be worn, but the cleats must be a part of the natural design of the shoe. Metal cleats are not permitted.

Shorts / sweat pants with pockets are prohibited. Shirts must be tucked in. Players wear 2 flags, placed on each side of the hips. The white part is placed on the inside of the pants but must be visible at all times. The coloured part may not be same or similar colour as the shorts. Every effort must be made to keep one flag on each hip. The flags must be flat, must not be altered or cut, and the sockets must not be glued or changed in any way. Flags must be clearly visible and must not be covered in any way by the players' uniforms.

The play is stopped when the defensive player raises the flag to show the referee that it has been removed. If a ball carrier's flag falls off by itself or is inadvertently knocked off by the ball carrier, the play will continue and the ball carrier should be touched. Players are eligible to catch a pass or receive the ball by hand off, toss or pitch.

Flag guarding, blocking and jumping to avoid being deflagged are all not permitted. The play will be called dead at the point of infraction. Shirts that are not tucked in all the way around is also flag guarding. Stiff arming is a roughing penalty.

When a player removes an opponent's flag to end a play, the player must first hold up the flag to show the referee and hand the flag back to the respective opponent. To toss a flag aside or to the ground for the opponent to pick up is considered unsportsmanlike conduct.

Section 2: The Game

Length of Game

All games will be 15 minutes running time for the 1st & 3rd quarters and 12 minutes running time + 5 plays for the 2nd & 4th quarters. Converts, kickoffs and replays after penalties do not count as a play.

No game can end in a tie. Overtime must be played. Each team will be awarded 3 convert attempts (the team may choose a 1 or 2 pt convert) Total Points wins. If the teams are still tied, each team will be awarded 1 convert attempt until the tie is broken. Choice of 1 or 2 points.

Time outs

Each team is allowed a maximum of three time outs per game. There is one 60-second time out per half, which, if not used in the first half, cannot be carried over to the second half and an additional 60-second time out to be used at any time during the game. Half-time is 5 minutes.

Number of players

The game is played 7 against 7. A team must have a minimum of 7 players to start the game, but may finish with 6. Not having the minimum to start or less than 6 to finish will result in a forfeit.

Start of Game

The captain of the visiting shall have the option of kicking-off or receiving OR choice of ends to start the game.

KICKOFFS

The kick-off must travel 20 yards. If not, a 5 yard penalty will be applied **or** option of taking the ball where it was touched.

Offside

Members of the kicking team must stay behind the kick off line until the ball is kicked. Failure to do so will result in a five-yard offside penalty **or** decline and take the ball at the dead ball spot.

Out of Bounds

If the ball goes out of bounds on a kick off, it is a five yard illegal procedure penalty against the kicking team. The receiving team has the option to have the ball re-kicked at a point five yards back from the point of the last kick, to take possession of the ball 25-yards up from the point of the last kick or take the ball at the point it went out of bounds.

A ball being kicked through the end zone will result in the kicking team receiving 1 point and the ball will be scrimmaged from the 35 yard line. A ball hitting the goal post in flight is a dead ball and play will start at the 25 yard line. If it hit the goal post after striking the ground or a player of the receiving team, it will be placed on the receiving team's 10 yard line.

The receiving team is allowed one forward pass on the kick off. As any other situation, laterals are always allowed. The first person to touch the ball on the kick-off must be allowed 5 yard immunity (No yards - 15 yard penalty). The forward pass can be intercepted by the kicking team to gain possession of the ball.

Touching the Ball But No Recovery

In the air or on the ground, the player attempts to catch the ball but fails to but she/he touches the ball. The play is whistled immediately. The ball is to be placed where the receiving team touched the ball. 1st and 10 receiving team– It does not matter if it goes backwards, if it touches anyone at any time then it is whistled down dead.

Downs

The offensive team has 4 downs to cover at least 10 yards **and** complete 2 forward passes beyond the line of scrimmage for a 1st down to be awarded.

For any pass to count as a “forward pass”, it must be passed across the line of scrimmage. If team A gains yards downfield on their last down but doesn’t score and has not completed the required number of passes, they are entitled to the gain. Loss of ball at Point Ball Dead.

If team A scores, it doesn’t matter if they completed the required number of forward passes.

Punt plays

If a player attempts to catch the ball but fails to but touches the ball and it hits the ground the ball is dead at the point where it was touched.

Offensive players must remain immobilized on the line of scrimmage until the ball has been kicked. They can run downfield once the ball has been kicked. A minimum of 5 players must be stationary on the line.

Players on the punting team must give the receiver a minimum of 5 yards immunity (no yards-15 yard penalty).

A punt is considered blocked by the opposing team when a player of that team strikes the ball and the ball travels in the direction of, or parallel to, the punting team's dead ball line. When a punted ball hits the ground behind the line of scrimmage or behind the kicker's goal line, the play is dead. If this occurs in the field of play, the opposing team will take possession of the ball at the point the ball hits the ground. If this occurs in the end zone the opposing team will be awarded a safety touch if it is a scrimmage play or a single point, if it is a return punt from the end zone.

A blocked punt that goes out of bounds **before it hits the ground** will be awarded to the blocking team where the ball went out of bounds.

When a blocked punt **that has not touched the ground** is recovered by the kicking or receiving team, the ball remains in play. When the kicking team recovers the blocked punt, continuation of the play is considered normal – the team may kick, pass or run the ball. If a punt is blocked or tipped by the receiving team inside the end zone of the kicking team, and the ball does not cross the goal line or goes out of bounds inside the end zone, the receiving team scored a safety.

If a punt from the field of play hits the goal post, the ball is placed at the 10 yard line and no points are awarded. If it is the initial punt from the team's own end zone, it is a safety touch.

On all kicks, if a ball lies motionless on the ground for three seconds and there is no attempt to play the ball, the play shall be whistled dead.

Fumbles

As soon as a player loses control of the ball and it falls to the ground the play is dead.

Snapping the ball/Rusher/Line of scrimmage

The center puts the ball in play by snapping it between the legs in a continuous movement. The QB must be at least 5 yards from the center when she receives the ball. If the snap doesn't go 5 yards then it is a dead ball and loss of down where it touched the ground.

The offensive team must have at least one player on the line of scrimmage on either side of the center closing the line.

If the QB drops the snap, it is considered a fumble and results in a loss of down at the spot where the ball hit the ground.

To maintain a clear and direct path to the QB the rusher must line up one yard from the feet of the opposing centre not directly in front of that player and 5 yards from the ball. The rusher cannot be 2 yards outside of the snapper for him to have the unobstructed lane.

On a run play where the QB hands the ball to a player behind her, the rusher must have an unobstructed path to the ball. Penalty for rusher interference is 10 yards down repeated.

Once the centre sets the ball on the ground for the snap, the rusher is not permitted to change sides and maintain rushing privileges with the centre; unless, the quarterback goes in motion prior to the snap of the ball.

All defensive players must take a position at least one yard from the line of scrimmage on the opposite side.

Opponents are not permitted to line up within a radius of 3 yards of the centre.

If the rusher jumps offside, they can go back from beyond 5 yards and then go over the line of scrimmage. If the rusher doesn't retreat but never crosses the Line of scrimmage, then there is no

penalty. All defensive players are eligible to rush once the ball has been handed off or tossed, or there is a play action fake or fake handoff, or they can cross the line of scrimmage once the rusher has crossed. In all cases the rusher must cross the line of scrimmage prior to other defensive players crossing the line.

A huddle is compulsory after every change of possession.

Protection of QB

The rusher will be called for a roughing penalty if they make any kind of contact with the QB's throwing arm or hand or above the QB's shoulders while the QB is attempting to make a pass or is in the follow through.

Running Plays

Spinning is allowed, but the ball carrier cannot dive forward or jump to avoid a defensive player or gain yardage (no diving). One foot, at least, must remain in contact with the ground.

Offensive Charge. It is up to the ball carrier to avoid contact with the defender. If a defender has position to deflag, and the ball carrier makes no attempt to slow down or change direction and runs right into the defender, then it is an Offensive Charge – 10 yard penalty.

The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's hips are when the flag is pulled not where the ball is.

Pass Plays

Lateral Passes:

The number of lateral passes on the same play is unlimited. One or more lateral passes may be followed by a forward pass **provided** all lateral passes were executed behind the line of scrimmage.

If the lateral pass touches the ground or goes out of bounds, the play is dead at that point and belongs to the team that had possession before it became dead.

If the lateral pass is fumbled or goes out of bounds in the end zone, the play results in a safety or single as the case may be.

Forward Passes:

On a pass play, if Team A tips it forward and another Team A player catches it they can keep running.

Only one forward pass per down is permitted and must be made from behind the line of scrimmage. A second forward pass will result in the play being whistled dead, and the ball will be placed at the point where the second pass was thrown, but will not result in a loss of down. All offensive players are eligible receivers.

If a forward pass is blocked by a rusher and the QB manages to catch the ball they may run with the ball but may not throw a second pass. In this case, it will be considered an offside pass and the ball is spotted at the point of the 2nd pass, loss of down.

Complete Pass:

The forward pass is considered to be complete if:

- a) It is caught inbounds by a member of the offence (complete) or the defence (interception) before it touch the ground, goal post, or referee.
- b) A pass caught simultaneously by players of both teams will be granted to the offensive team.
- c) A player must have at least one foot in bounds for the pass to be completed. If in the opinion of the referee, the player was pushed out of bounds but otherwise would have landed in bounds, the pass would be considered complete.

d) A player who bobbles the ball and is deflagged by an opposing player is considered deflagged if and when the player gains control of the ball. The play is dead where the ball carrier has been deflagged.

e) On a pass play, if Team A tips it forward and another Team A player catches it they can keep running

Incomplete Pass:

A pass is considered incomplete if:

a) The ball touches the ground, goal post, referee or goes out of bounds.

b) A player catches the ball in the air and lands out of bounds without having been pushed out by an opponent.

Intentional Grounding: Will result in the following **unless** the defensive team declines the penalty and accepts the result of the play.

In the field of play: Will be penalized with a loss of down at the point where the ball was released.

In the end zone: Will result in a safety.

Pass Interference

If the defense commits it in the target zone, the ball is awarded to the offense at the point of the foul or ten yards in advance of the point of last scrimmage and an automatic first down is awarded to the offense. If the offense commits it in the target zone and the penalty is accepted, the defense is awarded the ball at the point of the foul or if on third down at the point of last scrimmage.

Blocking

Blocking for the ball carrier is not allowed. That includes running interference and getting in the way of the defender.

Holding

While attempting to deflag a runner, a defender must not grab and hold the runner's jersey enough to impede the runner's forward progress.

Application: 10 yards from point of foul

Extension

Players are not allowed to extend the ball using their arms, to gain additional yards while the play is live. There is a five yard penalty for doing so and the ball is considered dead at the point the extension began.

Players who have possession of the ball are not permitted to dive forward in an effort to gain additional yards. The penalty is 15 yards and the ball is considered dead at the point the dive began.

SCORING:

Touchdown: 6 points. Team scored upon has the option of kicking-off or receiving.

Convert: 1 point from 5 yards; 2 points from 10 yards.

Safety: 2 points. Team scoring has option of taking the ball on their own 35 or receiving a kick-off from the opponents 35.

Single: 1 point. Ball is scrimmaged from the 35.

Penalties:

Loss of 5 yards

Illegal Procedure - from line of scrimmage (Option)
Off side- from line of scrimmage (Option)
Kick-off out of bounds (Option)
Too long in huddle - from line of scrimmage
Extending the ball to gain yards (from point of infraction)

Loss of 10 yards

Illegal use of hands / Holding (from point of infraction)
Blocking / obstruction (from point of infraction)
Too many players - from line of scrimmage (Option)
Charging (from point of infraction)
Illegal substitution or return to play - from line of scrimmage (Option)

Loss of 15 yards

Unnecessary Roughness (from point of dead ball)
Unsportsmanlike conduct (from point of dead ball)
No Yards (from point of infraction)
Diving to gain yards (from point of infraction)

Loss of Down

Illegal forward pass (from point of infraction)
Intentional grounding (from point of infraction)

All ejections carry an additional 15-yard penalty from the point of infraction.