

Lynn Haven 7 vs 7 Flag Football Rules

Updated: January 6, 2022



Players

1. All team rosters will be determined during the player draft and evaluation process (see draft rules for more information).
2. To be eligible for a roster, players must be no more than maximum age for an age group on December 31 of the current playing year.

2021-22 Age Groups: 5-6, 7-8, 9-11, 12-15
3. There will be a maximum of 7 players on the field at a time per team. Teams may start a game with 6 players. A team having 5 or less players at the game's start time will result in a forfeit.
4. Players cannot play for more than one team in an age group. However, players can play up in an older age group in addition to their normal age group. No special consideration will be given (scheduling or otherwise) for athletes playing on multiple teams across multiple age divisions.
5. Substitution are allowed after dead balls.
6. Every player must make an appearance each half. Players may play on either offense or defense, or both.

Coaches

1. All coaches and assistant coaches will be subject to a background check. A consent form for a background check will be sent to each coach.
2. Coaches are anticipated to uphold the highest standards of personal conduct, both on and off the field.
3. Each team may have a maximum of 3 coaches (1 head coach, up to two assistants).

Equipment

1. Teams must wear the same color shirt or jersey, which will be provided by the city.
2. Shirts must always be tucked in.

3. Plastic cleats (recommended), sneakers, and artificial turf shoes are permitted. No metal spikes or bare feet are allowed.
4. **Players are NOT allowed to wear shorts/pants WITH POCKETS**, even if the pockets are taped. This is a safety issue, and there will be no exceptions.
5. Players may not wear jewelry (rings, necklaces, watches, earrings, etc.) during games.
6. Players may wear gloves and sweatbands. They may not wear hats and hoodies.
7. All players must wear a flag belt provided by the Lynn Haven Community Services staff during all games. If, during a play, a player loses his/her flag belt and has possession of the ball, the defense must touch them with one hand between the shoulders and knees to make the legal “touch.”
8. Mouthpieces are not required, but heavily encouraged.

Field of Play

1. The total playing area will be about 80 yards long and 20 yards wide.
2. The field of play, excluding endzones, will be 60 yards long and 20 yards wide.
3. Each endzone will be 10 yards deep and 20 yards wide.
4. First down lines will be placed on the field every 15 yards between the endzones (three lines in total).
5. White lines will be striped marking each 5-yard line. The ball will be placed here at the start of possessions and on point-after-touchdown (PAT) attempts.
6. There will be a no run zone on each end of the field from the goal line to the 5-yard line. When a team has possession inside their opponent’s 5-yard line, they may only perform pass plays.

Game Time & Overtime

1. Teams will play two 15-minute halves for Age 5-6, and two 20-minute halves for Age 7-8, 9-11, and 12-15. Halftime will last 4 minutes.
2. The game clock will be a **running clock** and will **not stop for out-of-bounds, incompletions, or scores** except in the final 2 minutes of the 2nd half.
3. The game clock will stop for injuries.
4. Each team has 1 timeout per half. Each timeout will last no longer than 60 seconds.
5. The team with the highest score at the end of regulation time wins.

6. If the teams are tied at the end of regulation time, an overtime period will be used to determine a winner. Overtime format is as follows:
 - a. A coin flip will determine the team that chooses to be on offense or defense first.
 - i. If a second round of overtime must be played, the team that lost the coin toss will get to choose offense or defense for the start of the 2nd round of overtime. This process continues with teams alternating who gets to choose to be on offense or defense beginning each overtime period.
 - ii. The referee will determine which side of the field the overtime will take place on.
 - b. Each team will take turns getting one (1) play from the defense's 5-yard line for one point or the defense's 10 yard line for two points. Whether to go for one or two points is up to the offensive team. Whether the team that started on offense scores or not the team that started on defense will get a chance to win or tie by converting a one- or two-point play of their own.
 - i. Example: Team A starts on offense and chooses to go for one point from the 5-yard line and is successful. Team B is then on offense and can choose to either go for one point from the 5-yard line to tie and force a second round of overtime or to go for two points from the 10-yard line to win.
 - ii. If the second team on offense in an overtime period fails to beat or tie the team that went first, the team that went first wins.
 - iii. All regulation period rules and penalties apply. No Timeouts in Overtime.

Rainouts

1. When a game is canceled, all players, parents, coaches, officials, and other relevant personnel will be notified as of 8pm the night prior for games. All league personnel will be notified of practice cancellation by 4pm the day of practice.

Gameplay

1. The official shall toss a coin after designating which captain will call heads/tails BEFORE the toss. The winner of the toss has a choice of options for the first half. The options are as follows: either choose whether to play offense (receive) or play defense ("kick") or choose which end of the field the team wishes to defend. Whatever the choice, the toss winner's team will do the opposite ("kick"/receive) in the second half. The loser of the toss will choose from the remaining selections available. Teams will also switch ends to be defended at the half.

2. There will be no kickoffs to start the game, after halftime, or after a score.
3. At the start of each half, and after a score, the offense will begin at their start line (their own 5-yard line).
4. First downs can be made every 15 yards. There will be clearly visible lines to mark the first down lines on the playing field.
5. Teams will have 4 downs to make a first down.
6. One coach per team for the 6U and 8U division will be allowed on the field for coaching. 20 seconds into the play clock each coach must be a minimum of 15 yds away from the line of scrimmage and must make every effort not to impede play with their presence on the field.

Live Ball / Dead Ball

1. The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.
2. The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage.
 - a. It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on defense or offense enters the neutral zone, the official may give a "courtesy" neutral zone notification to allow their players to move back behind the line of scrimmage.
3. A player who gains possession in the air is considered inbounds as long as one foot comes down in the field of play.
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 conduct penalty.
5. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
6. Play is ruled "dead" when:
 - a. The ball hits the ground.
 - i. If the ball hits the ground as a result of a bad snap , the ball is then placed where the ball hit the ground.
 - b. The ball carrier's flag is pulled.
 - c. The ball carrier steps out of bounds.
 - d. A touchdown, PAT, or safety is scored.
 - e. The ball carrier's knee or arm hits the ground is scored.
 - f. The ball carrier's flag falls out. The possession will end where the player was touched.
 - g. Inadvertent whistle.
 - h. In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has two options.

- i. Take the ball where it was when the whistle blew, and the down is consumed.
- ii. Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.

Offense

1. The center must be on the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Players can shift before the snap.
2. The quarterback (QB) must be at least 3 yards behind the center. No snaps may be taken directly under center.

Exception: For the Age 5-6 division, the QB may snap the ball already in his/her hand.

2a. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball. If a quarterback hands the ball off to another player, they may get the ball back and become a runner. The quarterback is the offensive player who receives the snap. QB's can run in 6U, 8U, & 11U.

- a. A quarterback or runner may not cross the line of scrimmage and run back behind the line of scrimmage to throw a pass.
 - b. 15U- The QB is the person the ball is snapped to, they cannot run unless another player touches the ball in between and a legal play gives the QB the ball (handoff, forward pass, lateral)
3. The ball must be snapped between the center's legs or to the side. The ball may be snapped to any player behind the line of scrimmage.
 4. Play clock: The offense will have 30 seconds between plays to snap the ball. The officials will keep track of the play clock. When the play clock reaches 10 seconds, the referee will give a warning to the offense. Failure to snap the ball before the play clock expires will result in a delay of game penalty (5 yards).
 - a. The QB has an 8-second "pass clock". If a pass is not thrown in within the 8 seconds, the play is dead, the down is consumed and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off the 8 second rule is no longer in effect. If the QB is standing in the endzone at the end of 8 seconds it will be ruled as a safety.
 5. Before the snap only one player is allowed to be in motion at a time. This motion must be to the side or backward, not forward.
 6. Only one forward pass is allowed per down. Forward passes must be a minimum of 3 yards and made from behind the line of scrimmage. Official will determine if pass length is long enough.

- a. Only direct handoffs 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.
 - b. "Center Sneak" play is not allowed. The QB is not allowed to handoff to the center on the first handoff of the play.
7. There are no fumbles. Any ball that hits the ground is dead. If the ball carrier's elbows or knees touch the ground, the ball is dead. The ball carrier may place his/her off hand on the ground to maintain balance.
8. Bobble Rule: Once the receiver makes contact with the ball, the defender can pull the receiver's flag regardless of if the receiver has control of the ball. The play will be blown dead where the flag is pulled. If the defender pulls the flag BEFORE the receiver makes contact, the receiver may continue to run after the catch and be "touched" by a defender's hand between the knees and shoulders.
9. Receivers (and defenders) may jump or dive to make a catch. However, any player in possession of the ball may not jump over another player to avoid a touch or dive to advance the ball. Normal evasive action of a ball carrier to avoid defenders is legal, and "jumping" will be at the discretion of the official.
10. Receivers may not make contact with a defender and/or push off a defender when attempting to catch the ball (10-yard penalty for violation).
11. A catch is legal when the receiver has possession and at least one foot is on the ground in bounds. Calls will be at the discretion of the officials.
12. In the event of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
13. Flag guarding is not allowed. The ball carrier may spin or juke to avoid a flag pull, but may not use his/her hands, arms, feet, legs, head, or the ball to purposely deflect a defender.
14. Ball carriers may spin in order to avoid a flag pull, but they must have at least one step between each spin. Ball carriers may NOT spin continuously; doing so will result in a flag guarding penalty.
15. Ball carriers may not run "out of control" by dropping down, trying to run into or over defenders (10-yard penalty for violation).
16. There is no foul for intentional grounding. QBs may ground the ball or throw it out of bounds without penalty, and the ball will be placed back at the previous line of scrimmage for the next down.

17. In the event of a deflected ball that is caught by the quarterback, he/she may only run with the ball, even though it may be caught behind the line of scrimmage. The QB cannot throw the ball again.
18. All blocking/shielding must be made with both hands below their the belt ,the blocker in an upright position, with both hands clasped in front of them, behind their backs, or directly at their sides (10-yard penalty for violation). No crossing of arms or projection of elbows will be permitted.
19. No blocking outside of 5 yards beyond the line of scrimmage or “screening” is allowed at any time. No body blocks, roll blocks, or shoulder blocks are allowed at any time. Players may NOT keep their elbows out when blocking/shielding; they must be against the body (10-yard penalty for violation).
20. Offensive players without the ball cannot interfere with the pursuit of the ball carrier by defensive players once the ball has passed their line of scrimmage. This can be considered a form of flag guarding and will be assessed a 10-yard penalty.
21. The offensive blockers may retreat backwards or side to side in order to block for the quarterback.
22. Blockers are allowed to move their legs and feet while blocking/shielding, as long as their feet do not come in contact with the defender.
23. The referee will ask the offensive team on all fourth downs if they intend to punt or “go for it.” There are no physical kicks or punts. The opposing team will “receive the punt” from their start line (own 5-yard line).
24. If a team “goes for it” on fourth down and fails to make the first down, it is a turnover on downs. The team on defense will gain possession of the ball at one of the following spots:
 - a. For an incomplete pass, the team on defense will gain possession at the previous line of scrimmage.
 - b. For any other play resulting in a flag pull short of the first down line, the team on defense will gain possession at the spot where the flag is pulled.

Defense

1. Rushers must line up on or behind the restraining line, which is 5 yards (Ages 5-6 and 7-8) or 7 yards (Ages 9-11 and 12-15) from the line of scrimmage. If a rusher crosses the restraining line into the “neutral zone,” he may return before the ball is snapped.
Defenders who are **not** rushing may line up on the line of scrimmage.

- a. Once the ball has been handed off the restraining line rule is no longer in effect and, all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
 - b. A cone will mark the rush distance from the line of scrimmage.
2. Defenses may send in as many rushers past the line of scrimmage as they choose, or none at all.
3. A legal rush is:
 - a. A rush from anywhere on the field after the ball has been handed off by the quarterback.
 - b. If a rusher leaves the rush line early (breaks the restraining line) and the ball is handed off before he/she crosses the line of scrimmage, he/she may legally rush the quarterback.
4. A penalty may be called if :
 - a. The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff, or pass – illegal rush
 - b. Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped – Offsides
 - c. 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
5. There is no “bull rushing.” The pass rusher may not try to run through the center or any blocker or use his/her hands/arms to push. He must try to move inside or outside of them with minimal body contact (10-yard penalty for violation).
6. The rusher may only go for the QB’s flags not swiping for the ball or at arms to interfere with a pass. If it is handed off behind the line of scrimmage rushers and non may engage whoever has the ball in flag pulling. No stripping or attempting any deflection of the ball.
7. A sack occurs if the quarterback’s flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball is placed where the QB’s feet are when flag is pulled. A safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive teams endzone.
8. Absolutely no stripping or attempting to knock the ball out of the offensive player’s hands. Defenders must only attempt to pull the ball carrier’s flags (10-yard penalty for violation).
9. The defender is allowed to try to knock the ball away if the receiver is trying to establish possession. However, once the ball is secured, it may not be stripped.

10. No “bump and run” coverage. Defenders may not make contact with the offensive players even if it is within the first five yards from the line of scrimmage.
11. No face guarding. The defender must turn and look for the ball in play. Face guarding which leads to contact will result in the same consequence as a pass interference penalty.
12. Last Man Rule: If the last defender available to make a play on a ball carrier holds, pushes, tackles, or in any way impeded the offensive player’s progress without pulling the flags, the result of the play is a touchdown. This is a judgement call by the official.
13. Interceptions are live and may be returned. Laterals are not allowed on an interception return. If an interception occurs in the end zone and the flag is pulled or the player takes a knee while in the end zone, it is then a touchback, and the ball will be placed on the 5-yard line. If the ball is advanced beyond the goal line, the new offense will get the ball at the spot of the flag pull.
14. Interceptions change the possession of the ball at the point of interception. Interceptions are the only change of possessions that do not start on the 5- yard line.
15. If an interception occurs on a PAT play and then returned by the defense for a score, the point value of the defensive return is worth the same value as the original PAT attempt by the offense.
16. When determining the spot of the ball when a flag is pulled, the spot will be where the flag has been pulled, not where the ball is.
17. When the official gives the offense the 10-second warning, the defenders, their teammates on the sidelines, coaches, and/or spectators may **NOT** count down out loud.
18. Defensive players, their teammates on the sidelines, and/or coaches are allowed to communicate or call plays before the snap. However, they may not do anything to draw the offense into a false start (5-yard penalty for violation).
19. Defensive players, their teammates on the sidelines, coaches, and/or spectators may not call out any signals that interfere with the offensive team’s communication (5-yard penalty for violation).

Scoring

1. When a player crosses the opponent’s goal line with possession of the ball, it is a touchdown; 6 points are awarded to the scoring player’s team. A touchdown may be scored by either the offense or the defense (i.e., on an interception return).

2. After scoring a touchdown, the scoring team will choose to attempt either a point-after-touchdown (PAT; 1 point) or two-point conversion (2 points).
 - a. PAT – The ball is placed on the 5-yard line (on the “X”). The offense has one attempt to get into the end zone; if successful, the offense will be awarded 1 point. **PAT attempts MUST be pass plays; no run plays allowed.**
 - b. Two-Point Conversion – The ball is placed on the 10-yard line. The offense has one attempt to get into the end zone; if successful, the offense will be awarded 2 points. **Two-point conversions may be either pass or run plays.**
3. After a team scores, the other team will gain possession on their own 5-yard line.
4. If a defensive player pulls the ball carrier’s flag in that player’s own end zone, the play is a safety. The defense is awarded 2 points, and the scoring team gains possession at their own 5-yard line.

Conduct

1. For the Age 7-8 division and higher, no coaches will be allowed on the field during games. For the Age 5-6 division, **one** coach will be permitted to be on the field; however, he/she may not coach from the field once the ball is snapped until the play’s conclusion.
2. All players shall respect the calls of the officials. Questioning calls for clarification and respectful discussion is allowed but arguing/complaining is not.
3. There will be no protests following a game. The officials’ calls are final.
4. Taunting on offense or defense is strictly prohibited and will result in a 15-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.
5. Any player involved in fighting shall be immediately ejected from the game and subject to suspension.
6. ANY profanity on the field/sidelines will result in an immediate unsportsmanlike conduct penalty and ejection.
7. Players receiving a second unsportsmanlike conduct penalty in the same game will be automatically ejected and subject to possible suspension for future team play.
8. Teams must clean up any mess and remove any trash from their bench area following each game.
9. No alcohol, drugs, cigarettes, cigars, or other forms of tobacco or E-cigarettes are allowed at the ballpark.

10. Team coaches, captains, AND players are responsible for the conduct of their fans and guests. Failure to adequately supervise fans/guests could result in ejections, suspensions, and/or forfeiture of games.

Penalty Definitions

Penalties with a loss of 5 yards

1. Delay of game
2. Illegal substitution/Too many players on the field
3. Interference with opponent or ball before snap
4. Stripping or purposeful contact with the ball in an attempt to strip it
5. Offensive false start
6. Defensive offsides or encroachment
7. Illegal formation (i.e., center not on the line of scrimmage at snap)
8. Illegal procedure (shift or motion)
9. Illegal forward pass
10. Illegal equipment (shirt not tucked, etc.; in addition, player will not be allowed to return to the game until the equipment is fixed)

Penalties with a loss of 10 yards

1. Delaying the start of either half
2. Offensive pass interference
3. Defensive pass interference (automatic first down)
4. Offensive holding
5. Defensive holding a receiver/blocker or a ball carrier to remove his/her flag.
6. Clipping, hurdling, diving
7. Illegal use of hands, elbows, or arms
8. Illegal blocking/rushing
9. Roughing the passer (includes any contact with QB before/after ball is thrown)
10. Flag guarding (from spot of foul)
11. Stiff arming

Penalties with a loss of 15 yards

1. Unsportsmanlike conduct such as profanity, purposely shoving players to the ground, tackling, taunting, and tripping opponents

NOTE: If you have any questions about the above rules regarding interpretation, clarification, etc., please contact the Recreation Coordinator. The Recreation Coordinator reserves the right to amend the rules at any time with or without advance notice.