

# Carrboro Recreation and Parks



## 2023 RULES

## Game

1. At the start of each game, captains from both teams meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who starts with the ball. The visiting team calls the toss.
2. The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense. The loser of the coin toss has the choice of direction. Possession changes to start the second half to the team that started the game on defense.
3. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four (4) downs to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three (3) downs to score a touchdown.
  - a. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, on 3 downs, and elect to "punt" on 4th down, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its own 5-yard line. If the offensive team goes for it on 4th down and does not cross field, the opposing team will start its possession from the spot.
  - b. If the offense fails to score, after crossing midfield, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts its drive on its own 5-yard line.
  - c. Offensive Teams MUST declare 4th down intent or snap the ball prior to the expiration of the 25 second Play Clock.
4. Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.

# Terminology

**Boundary Lines** - The outer perimeter lines around the field. They include the sidelines and back of the end zone lines.

**Line of Scrimmage (LOS)** - an imaginary line running through the point of the football and across the width of the field.

**Line-to-Gain** - The line the offense must pass to get a first down or score.

**Rush Line** - An imaginary line running across the width of the field 7 yards (into the defensive side) from the line of scrimmage.

**Offense** - The team with possession of the ball.

**Defense** - The team opposing the offense to prevent it from advancing the ball.

**Passer** - The offensive player who throws the ball and may or may not be the quarterback.

**Rusher** - The defensive player assigned to rush the quarterback to prevent the player from passing the ball by pulling the flag(s) or by blocking the pass.

**Downs** - The offensive team has four "downs" to advance the ball. It must cross the line to gain to get a new set of downs or to score.

**Live Ball** - Refers to the period of time that the play is in action. Generally used in regard to penalties. Live ball penalties are considered part of the play and must be enforced before the down is considered complete.

**Dead Ball** - Refers to the period of time immediately before or after a play.

**Whistle** - Sound made by an official using a whistle that signifies the end of the play or a stop in the action for a timeout, halftime or the end of the game.

**Inadvertent Whistle** - Official's whistle that is performed in error.

**Charging** - An illegal movement of the ball-carrier directly at a defensive player who has established position on the field. This includes lowering the head or initiating contact with a shoulder, forearm or the chest.

**Flag Guarding** - An illegal act by the ball-carrier to prevent a defender from pulling the ball-carrier's flags by stiff arm, lowering elbow or head or by blocking access to the runner's flags with a hand, arm, or ball.

**Shovel Pass** - A legal forward pass across the line of scrimmage underhand, backhand, or by pushing the ball forward.

**Lateral** - A backward or sideways toss of the ball by the ball-carrier. Lateral passes caught cannot be advanced beyond the line of scrimmage.

**Unsportsmanlike Conduct** - A rude, confrontational or offensive behavior or language.

## Eligibility

All players' must be registered and legal guardians must agree to the online waiver form at [nflflag.com/form/player](http://nflflag.com/form/player) for the specific league before participating.

## Equipment

1. The league will provide each player with an official flag belt and NFL FLAG team jersey. Teams will use footballs provided by the league.
2. Players must wear shoes. Molded cleats are allowed to be used however, cleats with exposed metal are never allowed and must be removed.
3. Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads and knee pads.
4. **Dangerous Equipment** – A player may not participate in games in situations where equipment or apparel is dangerous or confusing to other players or is not appropriate. Examples of items include but are not limited to:

1 – Illegal guards, casts or braces

a – a guard, cast or brace made of hard and unyielding leather, plaster, pliable (soft) plastic, metal or any other hard substance may not be worn on the elbow, hand, finger, wrist or forearm, even though covered with soft padding.

b – hard and unyielding items (guards, casts, braces, etc.) on the upper arm or shoulder must be padded.

c – knee and ankle braces are permitted but all exposed hinges must be covered. Most over sleeves recommended by manufacturers are acceptable. These braces may be padded or unpadded.

In game situations, the decision to allow or not allow a player to participate due to potentially dangerous equipment will be left to the judgment of the officials and / or recreation staff.

5. Players must remove all jewelry, except for religious or medical reasons, hats and do-rags. If a participant wears jewelry as mentioned, it must be taped.
6. Players' jerseys must be tucked into shorts or pants if they hang below the belt line.
7. Players who wear shorts or pants are recommended not to have pockets. Any shorts or pants with belt loops or pockets must be taped.
8. Flag belts cannot be the same color as shorts or pants.
9. Players may wear mouth guards.

## Field

1. The field dimensions are 30 yards wide x 70 yards long with two 10-yard end zones. A midfield line-to-gain will be denoted by a line and 50 yard marker.
2. Teams cannot run the ball across the line of scrimmage in any fashion. All plays must be pass plays, even with a handoff or lateral behind the line of scrimmage.
3. Stepping on the boundary line is considered out of bounds.

## Coaching

1. Coaches are expected to adhere to Carrboro Recreation and Parks coaching guidelines and code of conduct.
2. Only two coaches per team are allowed on the sidelines.
3. Coaches must remain in their own half of the field and not go into the opposing team's side of the field.

## Rosters

1. Home teams wear dark color jerseys. Visiting teams wear light color jerseys.
2. Teams must consist of at least five players with a maximum of 8-10 players.
3. Teams must start games with a minimum of five players. In the event of an injury/sickness or player absence/leaving early, a team with insufficient substitute players may play with four players on the field but no fewer than four.

One of the main goals of this program is to ensure the opportunity that each player receives a positive experience while playing the sport. Coaches are encouraged to provide as much playing opportunity to each member of the team as possible. Development and playing experience should always prevail over winning.

## Mandatory Play Rules

All participants present will be guaranteed the opportunity to participate in a pre-determined minimal amount of minutes per game. Below are the guidelines that will govern the minimal amount of playing time.

### 1. 10 PLAYERS...

Everyone must start two quarters (one per half).

No substitutions may occur during the first 5 minutes of each quarter.

### 2. 7 TO 9 PLAYERS...

Everyone must start at least two quarters (one per half).

No player may start more than three quarters.

No substitutions are allowed during the first 5 minutes of each quarter.

### 3. 5 TO 6 PLAYERS...

Everyone must start at least three quarters.

No substitutions during the first 5 minutes of any quarter.

### Playing rule Exceptions

Any player becoming sick or injured and cannot continue, or ejected from the game is exempted from the minimal amount of playing time.

Any player who becomes sick or injured, but later feels better, may be reinserted back into the game provided he/she is able.

An injured or sick player may enter the game at any point of a quarter. However, if the player is reinserted after the completion of the quarter, he/she becomes exempt from the minimal amount of playing time.

Disciplinary action reported to and approved by the Recreation Supervisor no later than 48 hours prior to the game.

All players on rosters dressed in a town issued jersey must play under the mandatory playing rule. However, if a player is injured and cannot participate, he/she can sit on the bench while being in uniform. The Department must be notified that a player is ineligible due to an injury. The coach must notify the department (prior to the team's next game – not at the field) once the injured player is medically cleared to play.

Each coach will be provided with extra jerseys. The extra jersey may be used in the case of blood being on the shirt. Bloody shirts must be removed.

Any player with blood on the jersey cannot re-enter the game until he/she is wearing a blood free shirt. All players must be able to actively participate (i.e. perform the functions to actively play).

Failure to perform these functions rules a player ineligible to participate.

## Timing

1. Games are played with (4) 8 minute continuous clock quarters.\* Clock stoppages will only occur for touchdowns, timeouts or injuries. \*With 1 minute remaining in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarter only, the clock will also stop for the following situations:

- Change of possession
- Incomplete pass
- Ball carrier runs out of bounds
- Penalty
- Touchdown
- Point(s) After A Touchdown

2. Halftime is 5 minutes.

3. If a team is ahead by 30 or more points, the clock will run continuously and will not stop until the end of a quarter or the score drops under a 30 point difference.

4. Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 25 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.

5. Each team has one 30-second timeout per half.

6. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.

7. In the event of an injury, the clock will stop then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play.

8. Games tied at the end of regulation are recorded as a tie.

## Scoring

1. Touchdown: 6 points

2. PAT (point after touchdown) 1 point (2-yard line) or 2 points (5-yard line)

2a. A team who scores a touchdown must declare whether it wishes to attempt a 1-point conversion or a 2-point conversion. Any change, once a decision is made to try for the extra point, requires a charged timeout.

A decision cannot be changed after a penalty.

3. Safety: 2 points

A safety occurs when the ball-carrier is declared down in their own end zone.



Examples of a Safety Include:

- Runners can be called down when their flag(s) are pulled by a defensive player
- A flag falls out
- Steps out of bounds in the end zone
- Knee or arm touches the ground
- A fumble occurs in the end zone or if a snapped ball lands in or beyond the end zone.

4. Interceptions are returnable on conversions (PAT) after touchdowns. (2 points)

## 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. In regard to the neutral zone, the official may give both teams 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 once able to do so in a quarter. (Less than 4 minutes remaining in a quarter)

6. Any official can whistle the play dead.

7. Play is ruled “dead” when:

- a. The ball hits the ground.
- b. If the ball hits the ground as a result of a bad snap, the ball is then placed where the ball hit the ground.
- c. The ball-carrier’s flag is pulled.
- d. The ball-carrier steps out of bounds.
- e. A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored.
- f. The ball-carrier’s knee or arm hits the ground.

- g. The ball-carrier's flag falls out.
- h. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one or no flag(s)
- i. Ball carrier leaves their feet other than jump cuts, spinning or to avoid a downed player on the field of play.
- j. The 7 second pass clock expires.
- j. Inadvertent whistle.

NOTE: There are no fumbles. The ball becomes a dead ball. (If the ball is fumbled forward then it will be spotted where the ball-carrier lost possession..

8. In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has two options:

- a. Take the ball where it was when the whistle blew, and the down counts.
- b. Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage. If it occurs on the last play of the half or game, the offense will be awarded one untimed down and given those two options.

9. A team is allowed to use a timeout (1 per half) to question an official's rule interpretation. If the official's ruling is correct, the team will be charged a timeout. If the rule is interpreted incorrectly, the timeout will not be charged and the proper ruling will be enforced. Officials should all agree upon any controversial call in order to give each team the full benefit of each call.

## Running

- 1. The ball is spotted where the runner's feet are when the flag is pulled.
- 2. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball crossing over the line of scrimmage. The quarterback is the offensive player who receives the snap.
- 3. No handoffs, pitches, or laterals can be advanced beyond the line of scrimmage.
- 4. Any player who receives a handoff, pitch, or lateral can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- 5. Once the ball has been handed off, pitched, or lateraled from the quarterback, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- 7. Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding.
- 8. Spinning/Jump Cuts are allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a flag pull.
  - a. Players spinning out of control will be called for flag guarding.

9. Runners may leave their feet if there is a clear indication that the runner has done so to avoid collision with another player without a flag guarding penalty enforced.

9. No blocking or “screening” is allowed at any time.

10. Offensive players without the ball must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. No running with the ball-carrier.

11. Flag obstruction – All jerseys MUST be tucked in before play begins. The flags must be on the player’s hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.

## Passing

1. All passes must be thrown with one hand from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward and received beyond the line scrimmage.

a. All passes that do not cross the line of scrimmage, whether received or not, are illegal forward passes, unless touched by a defender.

b. The quarterback may throw the ball away to avoid a sack. The pass must go beyond the line of scrimmage.

2. Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.

3. The quarterback has a seven-second “pass clock.” If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, the play is dead, the down counts and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off, the 7-second rule is no longer in effect.

a. If the QB is standing in their own end zone at the end of the 7-second clock, the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage .

## Receiving

1. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).

2. The receiver must be beyond the line of scrimmage to receive a pass.

2. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. All motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted toward the line of scrimmage.

3. A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.

4. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.

## Rushing the Passer

1. All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback can defend on the line of scrimmage.

2. If the ball is handed off, the seven-yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage. Bear in mind, the runner may not cross over the line of scrimmage.

3. The referee will designate a rush line (judgment) seven yards from the line of scrimmage. Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.

a. A legal rush is:

- i. Any pass rush from a point 7 yards from the defensive line of scrimmage.
- ii. A pass rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off by the quarterback.

b. A penalty may be called if:

i. The pass rusher leaves the rush line before the snap and crosses the line of scrimmage early on a pass play  
= illegal rush (5 yards from the line of scrimmage and a first down).

ii. Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped  
= offsides (5 yards from line of scrimmage and a first down).

iii. 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 yards from the line of scrimmage and a first down).

iv. If the offense draws the rusher(s) to jump the seven-yard marker prior to the snap of the ball, that rusher(s) CANNOT rush during that play. However, any other defender that is seven yards back may rush instead. Jumping the rush is not a penalty until the rusher crosses the line of scrimmage prior to the handoff or passed ball.

c. Special circumstances:

i. Teams are not required to rush the quarterback with the seven second clock in effect.

ii. Teams are not required to identify their pass rusher before the play.

4. Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however, contact to the QB, unless ruled incidental by the official, would result in a roughing the passer penalty.

5. The offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has the right to a clear path to the quarterback, regardless of where they line up prior to the snap. The PATH is set pre-snap from the rusher or rushers directly to the QB. PATH does not move once the quarterback moves. If the "path or line" is occupied by a moving offensive player, then it is the offense's responsibility to avoid the rusher. Any disruption to the rusher's path and/or contact will result in an impeding the rusher penalty. **If the offensive player does not move after the snap, then it is the rusher's responsibility to go around the offensive player and to avoid contact.**

6. A sack occurs if the quarterback's flag(s) are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball is spotted where possession of the ball is once the flag is pulled.

a. A safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team's end zone.

## Flag Pulling

1. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball-carrier is in full possession of the ball.

2. Defenders can dive to pull flags but cannot tackle, hold or run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.

3. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball-carrier's possession at any time.

4. If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during a play while that player has possession, the player is down immediately and the play ends. The ball is placed where the flag lands.

5. If a player who has one or no flags in their belt takes possession of the ball, the play is dead at that spot on the field.

6. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball.

7. Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball-carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the head, hand, arm or shoulder or intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey.

## Formations

1. Offenses must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage (the center) and up to four players on the line of scrimmage. The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.
  - a. Teams may shift formations prior to the snap as long as they are set for at least 1 second before the ball is snapped.
  - b. One player at a time may go in motion at least 1 yard behind the line of scrimmage.
2. Movement by a player who is set or a player who runs toward the line of scrimmage while in motion is considered a false start.
3. The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between the legs to a player in the backfield, and the ball must completely leave their hands

## Unsportsmanlike Conduct

1. If a referee witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the referee's discretion. No appeals will be considered. **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!**
2. Offensive or confrontational language is not allowed. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.
3. Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach or official.
4. Ball-carriers **MUST** make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.
5. Defenders are not allowed to run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.
6. Fans must adhere to good sportsmanship:

- a. Yell to cheer on your players, not to harass officials or other teams.
  - b. Keep comments clean and profanity free.
  - c. Compliment ALL players, not just one child or team.
7. Fans are required to keep the field safe and kid friendly:
- a. Keep younger children and equipment such as coolers, chairs and tents a minimum of 10 yards off the field and end zone area.
  - b. Dispose of ALL trash in designated trash cans.
8. Unsportsmanlike conduct penalties:
- a. Defense = 10 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
  - b. Offense = 10 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down

## Penalties

### i. General

1. The referee will call all penalties.
2. Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
3. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted.  
(Spot fouls)
4. Only the team captain or head coach may ask the referee questions about a rule clarification and interpretations. Players may not question calls.
5. Games or halves may not end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.
6. Penalties are assessed live ball then dead ball. Live ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered complete.
7. Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.

### **Defensive spot fouls**

Defensive pass interference = Automatic first down at spot of infraction

Defensive pass interference in the end zone = ball placed at 1 yard line

Defensive holding = 5 yards and automatic first down

Defensive holding in the end zone = ball placed at 1 yard line

Stripping = 10 yards and automatic first down

### **Offensive spot fouls**

Screening, or blocking running with the ball carrier = 10 yards and loss of down

Charging = 10 yards and loss of down

Flag guarding = 10 yards and loss of down

### **Defensive penalties**

Defensive unnecessary roughness = 10 yards and automatic first down

Defensive Unsportsmanlike conduct = 10 yards and automatic first down

Offside = 5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down

Illegal rush (Starting rush from inside 7-yards from line of scrimmage) = 5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down

Illegal flag pull (Before the receiver has the ball) = 5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down

Roughing the passer = 5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down

Taunting = 5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down

### **Offensive penalties**

Offensive unnecessary roughness = 10 yards and loss of down

Offensive unsportsmanlike conduct = 10 yards and loss of down

Offside / false start = 5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down

Illegal forward pass (Any pass received or lands behind the line of scrimmage or throwing a pass after crossing the line of scrimmage)  
= 5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down

Offensive pass interference = 5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down

Illegal motion (More than one person moving) = 5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down

Delay of game = 5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down

Impeding the rusher = 5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down



Illegal Procedure = 5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down

Taunting = 5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down