



WEST MICHIGAN FLAG FOOTBALL LEAGUE

OFFICIAL RULES

2024

Seasonal Format

- 10 Week Season
- 2 Conferences- Black & White
- Each Team Plays Own Conference Teams Twice and Opposing Conference Teams Once
- Top Two Teams From Each Conference go to Playoffs (Semifinal)
- Winning Team From Each Conference Plays in the Championship

Standings Decided Through This Order

1. Overall Record
2. Divisional Record
3. Total Points Accumulated (Seasonal)

Conferences	
<u>Black</u>	<u>White</u>
Purple	Red
Orange	Light Blue
Maroon	Green
Grey	Gold

*Disclaimer: Failure to show up to 3 games will begin to result in prize cut depending on team discretion.

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Field, Player, and Equipment Rules

1. Field

- a) The field will be played on a regular full sized football field with the white sidelines and back of endzone declaring out of bounds. Pylons will mark the four corners of the endzone on both sides of the field.

2. Ball

- a) Each team will be allowed to bring their own official sized football to use in play during offensive possession and throw-offs which should be subject to inspection by the Referee prior to the start of the game.

3. Flags

- a) Each team will be provided with a belt containing a set of 3 white or black flags which must always be worn unobstructed during gameplay and returned following the game.
- b) The offensive ball carrier is considered down when a singular flag is pulled off their belt. Flags must be visible and non-obstructed at all times. When pulling flags, they must be dropped at the point of the pull. Failure to abide by these rules will result in flag guarding or unsportsmanlike conduct penalties.

4. Uniforms

- a) Each player will be provided with a team jersey that must be tucked into shorts or pants at all times.
- b) Players must wear the jersey color in correspondence with schedule (Colored or White).
- c) Players are responsible for maintaining cleanliness and possession of their own jersey. (loss of a jersey will result in a replacement fee).
- d) Players are expected to wear neutral-colored shorts or sweatpants, as well as a neutral-colored undershirt (black, grey, navy, or white).
- e) Gloves and cleats are eligible to be worn by all players.
- f) No sunglasses are allowed.

- g) Hats may only be worn under two conditions (Backwards facing or Beanie).
- h) Jewelry must be tucked in at all times. (any wristwear is advised against).

5. Roster

- a) Each team will have a 10 to 12-player roster.
- b) Teams will have 7 players on the field at any given time.
- c) Teams will be given 5 minutes to warm up on the game field as soon as the current game is concluded. Any extra time needed to warm up should be done off the main field.
- d) Teams need a minimum of 6 players to start. If 6 players are not present 5 minutes after the scheduled game time, the game will result in a forfeit.
- e) Players will be asked to exit the game field as quickly as possible following the game in order for the next game to start.

6. Time

- a) **Game Duration:** Unless dictated otherwise, the game will be played in 4, 10-minute quarters.
- b) **Running Time:** The game will be played with a running clock. The clock will only stop under four conditions:
 - a) **Team Time Out**
 - b) **Penalty**
 - c) **Injury**
 - d) **Last Two Minutes of the First Half (Scores, Conversions, or Penalties)**

Running clock will be completely suspended in the last two minutes of the second half.

- c) **Controlled Time:** In the last two minutes of the second half, the game will be played with controlled time. During this time, the game clock will stop if one of the following six conditions are met, and restart on the following snap or throw-off:
 - a) **A Player in possession of the ball steps out of bounds**
 - b) **An attempted Pass is Incomplete**
 - c) **Change of possession**
 - d) **Scoring play**
 - e) **Conversion play**
 - f) **Penalty**

g) A Team or Referee Time Out

d) Time Out Lengths:

a) Team Time Outs (3 per half): 1 minute each

b) Quarter end: 1 minute

c) Halftime: 5 minutes

d) 2-Minute Warning (2nd Half Only): 1 minute

e) From Touchdown to Conversion: 30 seconds

f) Change of possession (in last two minutes of either half): 1 minute

g) Injury: 1 minute (longer will result in team forfeiting a time-out unless a penalty was called on the opposing team).

h) Regular Time to Overtime: 1 minute

e) **Time Outs:** Teams will be given 3 time outs per half. Two time outs may not be used in a row by one team, however, both teams may use one each prior to the same play.

f) **Play Clock:** Will start when the Referee sounds the ready for play whistle and the offense will have 20 seconds to start a new play. Failure to start a new play in this time frame will result in a penalty for delay of game, resulting in loss of down.

g) **10-Second Run off:** During controlled time, any penalty committed that stops the clock will have a 10-second run off, at the option of the non-offending team. If the 10-second run off is accepted, the game clock will start on the Referee's ready for play whistle. If there are less than 10 seconds remaining on the Game Clock and a runoff occurs, the game will be over.

If the game clock was stopped at the time of the penalty: There is no run off, and the game clock will start at the ready for play whistle.

7. Scoring

a) **Touchdown:** If the ball is reached over the goal-line threshold, the play will result in a touchdown. If thrown into the endzone, the receiving player must have both feet down in the field of play for it to be considered a touchdown. A touchdown awards a team 6 points.

b) **Conversions:** Following a touchdown, the scoring team will be given an opportunity to get extra points. This will be one play taken spotted at the middle of the field. The scoring team will be able to choose to take the play from one of the following spots:

a) 5-yard line: 1 point

- b) **10-yard line:** 2 points
- c) **20-yard line:** 3 points

If successful, the team will receive the points stated above. If unsuccessful, the team will receive no extra points. In both cases following the play, the scoring team will conduct a throw-off.

Conversion Rules: The ball may not be run on a 5-yard, 1 point attempt.

Conversion Illegal Procedure: If the offense runs the ball on a 5-yard, 1-point attempt, they will lose 5-yards and be forced to try the conversion again.

Conversion Defensive Points: If the defense recovers the football via fumble or interception and scores, they will be awarded with the same amount of points the offense chose to convert for. If the defense forces a safety on a conversion, they will receive 2 points.

Conversion Defensive Penalties (excluding DPI): If the defense commits a penalty on a failed conversion attempt (excluding defensive pass interference), the ball will be spotted at the next closest point attempt. For example, if a penalty is committed by the defense on a 20-yard, 3-point attempt, the offense will get to try again for 3 points at the 10-yard line. If another penalty is committed, they will advance to the 5-yard line. If a penalty is committed at the 5-yard line, the attempt is ruled successful.

Defensive Pass Interference: If the defense commits pass interference in the endzone, the offense will get to try to convert from the 2-yard line with the same point attempt regardless of the distance chosen.

- c) **Safety:** If the ball carrier has their flag pulled in their own endzone, this will result in a safety. The defense will be rewarded with two points and receive a throw-off.

8. Start of Game

- a) The first possession of the game will be decided prior to the game by the refs through a coin toss. During this time, the away team will call heads or tails. **If correct:** they will choose to throw-off or receive. If chose to receive to start the first half, they will throw-off to start the second half (visa-versa). The opposing team will then choose which side to defend or receive.
If incorrect: The opposing team will choose to throw-off or receive to start the first half, with the away team choosing which side to defend or receive.

9. Throw-Offs

- a) The throw-off will occur at the beginning of the 1st and 2nd halves and after any touchdown or safety (unless the team elects to attempt an Onside Play). The clock will start as soon as the ball is released.
- b) **Receiving Team:** Prior to the throw-off, the receiving team may line up in any formation as long as no player is across midfield before the ball is thrown. Players on the receiving team are also allowed to block in front of the body once the throwing team crosses the 50-yard line.
- c) **Throwing Team:** The throwing team may line up anywhere across and behind the 35-yard line. With the exception of the thrower, the throwing team is not permitted to run prior to the ball being released. The throwing team may not cross the 35-yard line until the ball is released. The thrower must stay between the hashes prior to releasing the ball. A player on the throwing team may not run directly into a player on the receiving team as they will get a charging penalty.
- d) **Advancing the Ball:** The receiving team may advance the ball upon catching it in bounds or scooping it off the ground.
- e) **Turnovers on Throw-Offs:** If the ball is fumbled or muffed by the receiving team and picked up by the throwing team at any point (unless it is a touchback or a flag is pulled), this will result in a turnover. If the ball is not touched by the receiving team, it will result in the receiving team beginning possession wherever the throwing team recovers the ball.
- f) **Touchback:** If the ball bounces into the endzone at any point, the ball will be considered a touchback and marked at the 25-yard line. The team will then have 4 downs to cross the 50-yard line and be rewarded with a new set of downs.
- g) **Kneeling:** If the ball is kneeled anywhere on the field on a reception, it is considered down at the spot of the knee. If kneeled in the receiving teams endzone, it will result in a touchback.
- h) **Ball Out of Bounds:** If the ball rolls out of bounds prior to the 25-yard line, the ball will be placed at the 25. If the ball rolls out of bounds between the throwing team and the 25-yard line, the ball will be spotted at the point in which it went out of bounds.
- i) **Receiving Team Penalties:** If the receiving team is charged with penalty, the ball will be moved 10 yards back from the spot of the foul. If the foul occurs within 10 yards of the receiving teams endzone, they will start at the spot of the foul.

- j) **Throwing Team Penalties:** If the throwing team is charged with a penalty, the ball will be spotted at the point of the foul. If the receiving team crosses this point on the return, they will be awarded 10 yards from the spot it was down.
- k) **Onside Play:** If a team elects to do an onside play, rather than a throw-off, they will be subject to a fourth and 20 situation from their own 30-yard line. If converted passed the midline, a fresh set of downs will be awarded, and the throwing team may continue possession. If failed, the “receiving team” will get the ball at the spot the play concluded.
- l) **Post Throw-Off:** Regardless of the spot the ball is downed on a throw-off, the receiving team must cross the 50-yard line to get a new set of downs.

10. Offensive Possession

- a) **Downs:** The field will be split into four 25-yard boxes that will award downs (Not 25-yards). In order to get a new set of downs, the offense must cross into the new box’s threshold. This means that the offense could be awarded with a set of downs already halfway through a 25-yard box.

Downs Following a Throw-Off (Not a Punt): A team must cross the 50-yard line to be awarded their first fresh set of downs.

- b) **Spotting the Ball:** If the ball is considered down between the hashmarks, the ball will be spotted by the Referee at the point it was down. If the ball is down outside of the hashmarks, the ball will be spotted on the hash mark closest to where the ball was downed.
- c) **Offensive Formation:** The offense must have 1 center and at least 3 receivers on the line of scrimmage prior to the snap. They also must have 1 quarterback, and at minimum, 1 running back at least two yards behind the line of scrimmage at all times for it to be considered an eligible formation. This means that the final player, player 7, is eligible to play wherever on the field, behind the line of scrimmage.
- d) **Positioning and Substitution:** Players may switch positions or substitute players between plays.
- e) **The Center:** The center must snap the ball to begin every play from the spot the ball was placed. The ball must travel between the feet in a backwards motion. The center may now travel anywhere on the field to block for the team. The center is not an eligible receiver.

- f) **Quarterback:** The quarterback has unlimited time to throw the ball, as he can be constantly pressured by the defense. The quarterback may run, pass, or hand off the ball. The quarterback may throw away the ball as long as it is towards a receiver.
- g) **Receivers:** Receivers may dive for any catch and proceed to get back up. However, if any part of a defensive player contacts the receiver anywhere on the body while in contact with the ground, the receiver is considered down.
- h) **Running Backs:** At least one running back must be lined up in the back field 2-yards off the line of scrimmage at all times. The running back's may receive any pass downfield as long as they are lined up eligible prior to the snap. They may take any handoff, bubble, or pitch. The 7th player may be used as a fullback for blocking circumstances.
- i) **Flex Player:** The seventh player on the offensive side is known as the flex player. As long as there is 3 receivers, 1 quarterback, 1 running back, and a center, this player can line up anywhere on the field. This gives the offense the opportunity to run a variety of plays using the flex as a halfback, fullback, or extra receiver.
- j) **Motion:** One player may be in motion prior to the ball being snapped.
- k) **Lateral:** The offense will be allowed one lateral per play. A pitch, handoff, or bubble does not count as a lateral. However, two of any of these do.
- l) **Blocking:** Offensive players may block opponents if done from the front side of the body.

11. Defensive Play

- a) **Defensive Formation:** The defense has no set formation.
- b) **Positioning and Substitution:** Players may switch positions or substitute players between plays.
- c) **Cornerbacks:** The corners may make contact with the receiver within 5-yards of the line of scrimmage. However, they may not hold the receiver or make any contact past 5-yards.
- d) **Blitzing:** The defense can blitz on every down.
- e) **Flag Pulling:** The offensive player is down whenever a singular flag is pulled. The defensive player will drop the flag at the point it was pulled to mark the spot of the down.

- f) **Offensive Player on Ground:** If the ballcarrier is on the ground at any point, any point of contact between the offensive and defensive players bodies will result in the ballcarrier being down.

12. Punting

- a) Teams are eligible to punt on 4th down if they have not crossed the 50-yard line. The team must announce to the Referee if they are planning to punt and give the defense 10 seconds to set up a formation.
- b) Punting will be conducted the same as a throw-off, with the kicking team lining up across the line of scrimmage, and the receiving team lining up 15 yards back from the line of scrimmage.
- c) Fake punts are not allowed.

13. Possession of Ball

- a) **Catching:** A player must have both feet in bounds on a reception for it to be considered a catch.
- b) **Fumbles:** Fumbles may be considered and recovered by the defense if the offensive player drops the ball at any point during the play. Two steps must be taken by the receiver after the catch for a fumble to be considered. If the flag is pulled before the fumble, the ballcarrier is down and the fumble does not count. **NO STRIPPING ALLOWED.**

14. Overtime

- a) If both teams are tied for points following the completion of the fourth quarter, a coin toss will occur, followed by a 1-minute intermission and a down based overtime period of play.
- b) **Coin Toss:** Following the completion of the fourth quarter, the away team will be asked by the Referee to call heads or tails. The Referee will then flip a coin. If the away team had guessed the flip correctly, they will get to choose first or second possession. If the away team had guessed the flip incorrectly, the decision will go to the home team.
- c) **Gameplay:** During the overtime period, a “set” will be conducted in which each team will be given two downs to score from their opposing team’s 25-yard line. In the event of

a touchdown, a conversion attempt will be tried. Whichever team scores more points between touchdown and conversion points within a set, will win the game.

If First Team Scores: If the first team in the set with offensive possession scores, the opposing team will get a chance to match or beat their points. Failure to do so will result in the loss of the game.

If First Team is Stopped: If the first team in the set with offensive possession fails to score in two downs, the opposing team will get their chance to score within two downs from their opponents 25-yard line. If any points are scored, this team will win the game following a conversion attempt.

If Both Teams Are Stopped and Fail to Score: If both teams are stopped and fail to score on any given set, the ball will be spotted 5-yards closer to the endzone per set. If the ball is to reach the 10-yard line, each team's downs will be reduced from 2 to 1 per set from this point until a winner is determined.

If Both Teams Score: The winner will be determined by the team who produced the most conversion points on the set.

If Both Teams Score and Tie: If teams both score and tie in a set, the set will be replayed from the same spot to determine a winner.

15. Penalties

Offensive Spot Fouls

Offensive spot fouls will take place from the spot the foul occurred.

- a) **Charging:** Charging will be called on any offensive or throw-off player who purposefully runs into a stationary defender. **Penalty: -10 yards and Loss of Down.**
- b) **Flag Guarding:** Flag guarding will be called on any offensive player who obstructs view or physical access to any of their three flags. **Penalty: -10 yards and Loss of Down.**
- c) **Block in the Back:** Will be called on any offensive player who blocks an opposing player in the back during play. **Penalty: -10 yards and Loss of Down.**

Offensive Penalties

- a) **Unnecessary Roughness:** Using any methods besides what is necessary to pull the flag of an opponent, or any violent action towards an opposing player in play. **Penalty: -10 yards and Loss of Down**
- b) **Unsportsmanlike Conduct:** Any offensive celebration, language, or violence towards the opposing team. **Penalty: -10 yards and Loss of Down**
- c) **Offsides or False Start:** A player moves in a way that indicates the start of the play prior to the snap. **Penalty: -5 yards and Loss of Down**
- d) **Illegal Forward Pass:** A player throws the ball forward once they are past the line of scrimmage. **Penalty: -5 yards and Loss of Down**
- e) **Pass Interference:** The offensive player hinders the defensive player's ability to intercept the ball. **Penalty: -5 yards and Loss of Down**
- f) **Illegal Motion:** More than one player in motion when the ball is snapped. **Penalty: -5 yards and Loss of Down**
- g) **Delay of Game:** Team fails to snap or throw-off the ball prior to the 25 second timer ending. **Penalty: -5 yards and Loss of Down**
- h) **Illegal Procedure:** Any illegal procedure like an illegal formation or ineligible receiver downfield. **Penalty: -5 yards and Loss of Down**
- i) **Illegal Lateral:** Any forward lateral will be blown dead and be down at the spot it was released. Any 2nd backwards lateral on a play be blown dead and will result in the ball being placed where the ball is caught or lands.
- j) **Too Many Players:** If the offense has more than 7 players on the field during the snap, the play will be called dead and will result in a loss of down.

Defensive Spot Fouls

Defensive spot fouls will take place from the spot the foul occurred.

- a) **Defensive Pass Interference (DPI):** DPI will be called on any defensive player who hinders a receiver's ability to catch the ball. **Penalty: First Down**

- b) **Holding:** Holding will be called when a defensive player restrains any offensive player. **Penalty: +5 yards and First Down.**
- c) **Stripping:** Stripping will be called on any defensive player who attempts to smack or grab the football out of the ballcarriers hands. **Penalty: +10 yards and First Down.**

Defensive Penalties

- a) **Unnecessary Roughness:** Using any methods besides what is necessary to pull the flag of an opponent, or any violent action towards an opposing player in play. **Penalty: +10 yards and First Down**
- b) **Unsportsmanlike Conduct:** Any offensive celebration, language, or violence towards the opposing team. **Penalty: +10 yards First Down**
- c) **Offsides or False Start:** A player moves in a way that indicates the start of the play prior to the snap. **Penalty: +5 yards First Down**
- d) **Illegal Rush:** Defense blitzes after already using their one rush per set of downs. **Penalty: +5 yards First Down**
- e) **Illegal Flag Pull:** Pulling the flag of an opponent before they have the ball. Flag pull does not count. **Penalty: +5 yards First Down**
- f) **Flag Delay:** Defense throws offensive players flag upon pulling it off. May result in unsportsmanlike conduct. **Penalty: +5 yards First Down**
- g) **Roughing the Passer:** A player makes contact with the passer after they have thrown a pass. **Penalty: +5 yards First Down**
- h) **Taunting:** A player purposely mocks or offends the opposing team. **Penalty: +5 yards First Down**
- i) **Too Many Players:** If the defense has more than 7 players on the field during the snap, the offense will be able to take the result of the play or redo the down from the spot of the snap.

