

# 2023 Pleasanton Junior Football League

*Flag Division*

**Players & Coaching Rules**



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**Pleasanton Junior Football League**  
**FLAG Division**  
**PLAYER and PLAYER RULES – 2023**  
(ARTICLE XI of the Pleasanton Junior Football League by-laws)

**SECTION I - STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES**

**1. Objectives:**

The objectives of the Pleasanton Junior Football Flag program are:

- A. To familiarize the players with the fundamentals of **8 Player** football and in so doing to firmly implant the ideals of good sportsmanship, honesty, loyalty, courage, and respect for authority. (Revised 2002)
- B. To provide an equal opportunity for all participants to play in a supervised, organized, and safety oriented manner without consideration of talent.
- C. To keep the players free of any adult ambition and personal glory so they may be well adjusted and happier children, able to grow to be good decent adults.

**2. Player Agent:**

During the season, the Player Agent and Division Coordinators have the responsibility and the authority to maintain the objectives of the Pleasanton Junior Football Flag division program for this league. (2001)

**3. Head Coaches:**

Each head coach must strive to help assistant coaches; parents and players understand the objectives of the Pleasanton Junior Football League. Each head coach is the primary contact with assistant coaches, parents and players and represents the league on all major issues regarding the team unit. **COACHES HAVE THE GREATEST IMPACT ON SPORTSMANSHIP AND RULE ENFORCEMENT.**

**SECTION II - STATEMENT OF POLICY**

**1. Coaches and Players:**

Coaches and Players will not use any alcohol or drugs during a game or practice, will not criticize officials or opposing teams or players in front of spectators, will not allow ineligible players to participate, will not use or permit profane or abusive language, will refrain from running up the score by letting players shift positions, shall not receive financial benefit, will not commit an unsportsmanlike act. Coaches or Players will be suspended by the Board of Directors for any intentional violation of the By-Laws or Playing Rules of this league. It is the responsibility of the Head Coaches and other team officials to control unruly spectators; it is not the responsibility of the game officials.

**2. Parents, Spectators and Volunteers:**

Team fans and spectators cannot interfere with the progress of a game. Any fan that becomes a nuisance or exhibits unruly behavior must be asked to leave. Abusive or offensive behavior must be dealt with immediately. Under no circumstances will non-participants be permitted on the playing field. Adult volunteers are expected to set a good example for the children in the program. In the unlikely event that an adult volunteer is guilty of the above infractions, they would face possible suspension for the remainder of the season and extreme cases, suspension of the right to participate.

**3. Amenities:**

No team or member of the League may accept or use unapproved amenities such as warm-up jackets, trophies, special player equipment, or the like. Likewise, it is not desirable for team members to be given special trophies, special player equipment, or individual awards by their coaches and/or parents. Any such awards shall require

prior approval by the Board of Directors. Recognition of participation will be given each person, by the league, at the end of the season (certificate, medal, etc.). Any intentional violation of this section shall be considered to be a violation of the PJFL by-laws, and grounds for immediate suspension.

### SECTION III - PLAYER REGULATIONS

#### 1. Age, Weight, and Residence Requirements:

- A. Players are allowed to play from the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade thru the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Divisions will be balanced and divided by grade. (Revised 2000/2012)

2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	Junior Division
4 <sup>th</sup> & 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade,	Intermediate Division
6 <sup>th</sup> , 7 <sup>th</sup> , & 8 <sup>th</sup> , Grade,	Senior Division
9 <sup>th</sup> , 10 <sup>th</sup> , 11 <sup>th</sup> , 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	High School Division
- B. There is no height restriction on players.
- C. There is no weight restriction for players. (Revised 2002)
- D. Registrants must reside in Pleasanton or the surrounding towns of Livermore, Dublin, San Ramon, or Sunol. (or any city within 15 miles of Pleasanton.)
- E. Any exceptions or waivers to this section must be approved by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.

#### 2. Registration:

- A. A complete player registration consists of:
  - 1. A valid PJFL application form (filled out completely and signed) for the current year.
  - 2. Payment of the registration fee, as set by the Board of Directors, a fee waiver may be granted for any applicant at the discretion of the Board of Directors of PJFL. No refunds of registration fees after 12:00pm of the last day prior to the first game of the season (Revised 2000/2012)
  - 3. Valid birth certificate, or any legal proof of age, must be presented to the League prior to the child being allowed to participate (play or practice). Once birth certificate on file with League, certificate will not be required for future registrations with PJFL.
- B. A copy of the registration information shall be given to the PJFL President, Player Agent, and Head Coach. The Player Agent shall maintain an up to date record of all team members throughout the season.

No application shall be accepted after the first week of practice, or at a time set by the Board of Directors.

If a player has played in the league, the previous year, then he/she is treated as a Pleasanton Resident (PR).

If the league fills completely during the registration period with PR, and a waiting list is started all PR will have priority on the waiting list over the Non Pleasanton Residence (NPR) during the registration period.

If the league fills during the registration period and a waiting list is started, NPR, who did not play the previous year, will be moved to the waiting list based on the order that they were registered.

After the registration period ends (the last official registration day) registration applications will be taken on a first come first serve basis regardless of residence. (Revised 1999)

### **3. Team Assignments:**

- A.** If requested, the player(s) of the Head Coach and one assistant coach shall be automatically placed on their Parent's team. NO coach shall appoint an assistant coach to recruit any player.
- B.** No team assignments may be made because of a potential player's talent other than record factors.
- C. *Official Roster:***  
Only players appearing on the official team roster are counted as players. This roster is completed before the first game of the season and will be the roster of the team for the season. Only the league Player Agent can add, remove or replace players on the official league roster of the team. There will be NO transfer of players from one team to another except by the Player Agent, Division Coordinator, and authorized by the Board of Directors. (Revised 2001)
- D. *Linking***  
Players may request to be on a team with a friend. However, it is at the Player Agent's discretion and only if the two players request each other. This is to prohibit "chaining requests" where a series of players request each other.
- E. *Adopting a player***  
If a Head Coach or Assistant Coach do not have a child in the program they may "Adopt" one player. This is to encourage the recruitment of good coaches who do not have a player playing in the program. The intention is to also develop the parents of the adopted player as future PJFL coaches and to create parity with the teams that have returning coaches with their own children assigned to their team year after year. (Added 7/1/05)

## **SECTION IV - REPLACEMENT OF TEAM MEMBERS**

### **1. Lost Player:**

Each Head Coach must inform the Player Agent and the Division Coordinator within 24 hours of a loss of an assigned team member. The Player Agent or Division Coordinator shall investigate why the member left the team. (Revised 2001)

### **2. Player Injury Situation:**

A player who, due to injury that required doctor's care, has missed his team's practice(s) or game, may only rejoin his team if the Player Agent has received a doctor's release. If the player has missed practices as a result of such injury, he may not play in a regularly scheduled game until he has participated in at least one practice before the game.

### **3. Missed Practices:**

A player can miss 1 scheduled team practice if coaches are notified prior to practice. If more than 1 practice is missed or the coach was not notified prior to the missed practice, the player can see restricted playing time in the next scheduled game. Should an excessive amount of practices or games be missed by a player, that player could be removed from the team. The head coach must contact the league Player Agent of the situation and a Board approval will be needed to remove the player in question. There will be no refund of fees should this situation occur. (Revised 1998)

## **SECTION V - RECRUITING**

Recruitment should be a goal of every PJFL member.

### **1. Coaches:**

Coaches shall participate in the Registration & Evaluation Days and help in the process of answering questions and completing registrations for flag football sign-up.

## **SECTION VI - TEAM PRACTICES**

### **1. Practices:**

Each coach shall hold all practices with his entire team:

- A. Prior to Opening Day of the Flag Football Season there shall be two practices per week with the requirement that one of the two practices be held on a Saturday. Each team shall have exactly six practices prior to opening day. Each player must have attended a minimum of four practices to be eligible to play the first game.
- B. After the first game of the season and continuing throughout the entire season, practices will be conducted exactly one time during the week. (Revised 2000)
- C. A team can have a Pre-Game Practice a maximum of one hour before the scheduled game.
- D. Each regular practice shall consist of warm up and conditioning exercises, and will last no longer than 2-hours in its entirety. (Revised 2004)
- E. There shall be no practices with other PJFL divisions. Intra-Division Scrimmages will be permitted under the following conditions;
  1. Cannot be earlier than the second full week of practice session.
  2. Considered a joint practice session.
  3. Game score is not kept.
  4. No official timing.
  5. Practice maximum cannot be violated.
  6. Mandatory ten (10) minute break at the end of one (1) hour.

### **2. Location:**

Team practices shall be conducted at the location designated by PJFL, **Ken Mercer Sports Park & Patelco Sports Complex**. Indoor physical practices shall not be allowed for any individual team during the season unless facilities are made available to all teams.

### **3. Limitations:**

- A. There will be NO practices held on Sunday.
- B. There will be NO practices held on Labor Day Weekend. (Added 2000)

### **4. Illegal Practice**

- A. **20/20 Rule.** *The 20/20 penalty may be assessed to a team that holds an illegal practice. This penalty will be assessed on the 1<sup>st</sup> regular season game following the League's determination of this violation. See penalties section VII, 13. L.3. (Added 2000)*

## SECTION VII - FLAG FOOTBALL GAME RULES

### 1. Team Play:

#### A. Player Limit:

A game is played between two teams consisting of eight (8) players on the playing field during play.  
(Revised 2002)

**Penalty: More than eight (8) players on the field when the play starts 5 yards**  
(Revised 2002)

**Penalty: Substitution(s) while the ball is in play or before it is declared dead 5 yards**

**Penalty: Disqualified player entering game 5 yards**

#### B. Team Roster:

The desired team roster for all divisions shall have twelve (12) players, and a minimum of eight (8) players who must be dressed and ready to play each game. (Revised 2002)

**No Forfeits** If a team is unable to field enough players for a game, that Coach is to work closely with both the Division Coordinator and the opposing Coach to borrow players from another team in the same division. Only PJFL Flag registered players in the same division may be used to prevent a forfeit. (Ruled 2000 Added 2001)

#### C. Team Captains:

Two (2) or three (3) team captains on a revolving basis. This rotation would create an opportunity for all roster players to serve as a captain during the season. These players will represent the team and address an official on matters of interpretation of rules or to obtain essential information.

#### D. Mandatory Play Rule:

All players will start either on offense or defense and play the entire game. Once a player is assigned to the offensive or defensive lineup for the start of the half, the player will continue to play on that team until the half is complete, unless substitution is necessary due to injury. At the start of the next half the player can be assigned to either the offensive or defensive lineup. (Revised 2001)

No player may play (4) quarters when another player on the same team only plays (2) quarters. Therefore with a full roster of (12) players, (8) players would play (3) quarters and (4) players would play (2) quarters. (Added 2003)

**Penalty: If an infraction is discovered during the game, the team will be penalized 10 yards from the end of the previous play and the player will sit out one series on offense and defense before returning on one or the other. (Added 2007)**

Mandatory Playing Time				
Available Players	Playing Time			
	4-Qtr's	3-Qtr's	2-Qtr's	Total Qtr's.
14	0	4	10	32
13	0	6	7	32
12	0	8	4	32
11	0	10	1	32
10	2	8	0	32
9	5	4	0	32
8	8	0	0	32

**E. Player Disciplinary Action:**

If it is determined by the coach or referee that a player is not practicing good sportsmanship, the referee or the coach, after receiving approval from the referee, can pull the player for a total of 2 plays. The referee has the option to pull the player for as long as is considered necessary to keep control of the game.

**F. Coaches on Field:**

1. Maximum of two (2) coaches per team permitted on the field during the play. Exception: Only one (1) Defensive coach per team permitted on the field during play in the Senior Division, (2) Offensive coaches are allowed in the Senior division. (Revised 2004)
2. At the start of play, when the quarterback begins to call the cadence, the offensive coaches must be 10 yards behind the tailback and the defensive coaches must be 10 yards behind the safety. (Revised 2001).
3. If coaches are not in their required positions at the start of the play or are not making an effort to not interfere with the play, one warning will be issued to the team and on the second and following infractions a penalty will be assessed. If actual interference occurs by a coach who is not in the required position at the start of the play a penalty will be assessed without a warning.  
**Penalty: Coaches not in proper position on the field at the start of play. 10 yards, repeat down.**
4. The designated home team will be responsible for supplying two volunteers to handle down and distance markers for each game. In the event that the home team cannot obtain volunteers, the home coach will contact the visiting coach to obtain the necessary volunteers to run the down and distance markers. (Added 2012)

**G. Line Up Sheets**

1. Each team shall accurately and completely fill out an official league Line Up (provided on the web site for download) that includes the Player's name, **jersey number**, and the offense/defense segments they are assigned to play each half. If completing the line up via a computer the form will identify players that must be used for substitutes in case of a player injury. If hand writing a line up the coach is required to identify the players who are designated substitutes. (These are the players with the least play time indicated, typically 2 segments, on the line up)



A copy of the line up is to be provided to the Officials and Opponents prior to the coin toss  
***Penalty: Not providing a complete or accurate line up prior to the coin toss (20 yard penalty.)*** (Revised 2015)

## 2. Playing Field:

### A. Field Requirement

The field shall be rectangular with lines and zones and shall conform to the standard established by this rule:

#### 1. 80-yard field

This field measures one hundred yards in length, divided into 4 zones of twenty yards each between two ten (10) yard end zones. It is 40 yards wide.

#### 2. No Goal Posts Used

Goal posts are unnecessary as points after TD (conversions) are made only by passing or running and there are no field goals kicked.

#### 3. Conversion line

A conversion line will be marked three (3) yards from the goal line and at an equal distance from each sideline.

### B. Field Equipment

1. A Down Marker will be used to indicate the number of the down.

2. A Zone Marker will be used to indicate the distance to go for a first down (place at the forward zone line)

## 3. Playing Equipment:

### A. Game Ball

1. A legacy Nike Spiraltec Junior Ball – it will measure 12.5 inches in length and be 19.25 inches in circumference (short axis). This ball shall be used for the Senior and Masters Divisions. (Revised 2013)

2. A revised Nike Spiraltec Junior Ball – it will measure 12.0 inches in length and be 18.75 inches in circumference (short axis). This ball shall be used for the Intermediate Division (Added 2013)

3. A standard Nike Spiraltec PeeWee Ball – it will measure 11.5 inches in length and be 17.25 inches in circumference (short axis). This ball shall be used for the Junior Division.

4. This ball MUST be one that is provided by the league. (clarified 2008)

### B. Flags

1. Each player must wear a belt with the number of flags designated as “standard” by the league, which will be two (2) flags.

2. The flags will be attached to a belt and extend or hang from each side of the player’s body at the hips. The flags must be worn so that the flag holders face outward on the belt. (Revised 1998)

**Penalty: 5 yards from point of infraction. Down Stands**

3. Flags will be 14-20 inches long and a minimum of 2 inches wide

**Penalty: 5 yards from point of infraction. Down Stands**

4. The belt must be cinched tight to prevent being turned around during a de-flagging.

**Penalty: 5 yards from point of infraction. Down Stands**

5. The securing of flags to the body, waist or belt, other than provided by rule number 2 above is illegal.

**Penalty: 5 yards from point of infraction. Down Stands**

6. If a player's flag is inadvertently lost, that player is ineligible to advance the ball. If that player takes possession of the ball it is considered **dead at the point of possession**.

#### **4. Game Uniforms:**

1. All team members must wear the game jersey supplied by the league for game play.
2. All jerseys will be numbered, front and back, for proper identification by officials and statisticians (if used).
3. Uniform shorts provided by the league or Black gym shorts without pockets and without stripes will be worn for league game play. (Revised 2021)
4. Black sweat pants may be worn on cold days.
5. Jerseys will be tucked in at all times.
6. Non-detachable rubber or molded cleats on shoes (football, lacrosse, soccer or baseball style) are preferred, but sneakers are acceptable. No other footwear is acceptable.

##### **A. Eye Glasses:**

1. Eyeglasses, when worn, shall be of athletically approved construction with non-shattering glass (safety glass). They shall be secured with some type of safety straps.
2. Contact lenses may be worn.

##### **B. Mouth Guards;**

1. Mouth Guards are Mandatory. A mouth guard must be worn at all times during play at practice and in games.

#### **5. Prohibited Equipment:**

1. **Shoes**  
*Spiked or street shoes.*

**2. Padding**

*No padding of any kind, including hard surface padding such as shoulders pads, hip pads, and helmets.*

**3. Hard Metal**

*No hard metal or any other hard substance on a player's clothing or person, with the exception of emergency bracelets. Emergency bracelets can be worn as long as it is covered by a sweatband that could not be confused with the defensive rusher's red wristbands. (Revised 2012)*

**4. Flag Concealment**

*Anything that might conceal flags by players.*

**5. Unnatural Substances**

*Sticky substances such as grease or glue on a player's clothing.*

**6. Other Equipment**

*Any equipment, in the opinion of the referee that will endanger or confuse players.*

**6. Referees:**

**A. Number**

There will be at least two (2) referees appointed prior to the game by the league.

A third referee may be employed (at the BOD discretion) as a means to enforce Line play rules (e.g., Offensive holding / Illegal use of hands and Defensive rushing.) (Added 2013)

**B. Required Equipment**

Each game official will carry a red or yellow handkerchief flag and drop it when an infraction occurs. Officials will wear a black and white jersey. A whistle will be needed. A timepiece for the official game time keeping function. All equipment will be supplied by PJFL and be obtained at the Referee's Box on the sideline.

**C. Eligibility:**

1. Coaches may officiate if they have participated in the referee training sessions offered by the league.
2. No coach may officiate their own team.

**7. Game Play:**

1. Officials will meet with Head Coaches on the playing field prior to the coin toss for the game. At that time officials will:
  - a. Verify field markings and equipment
  - b. Verify team line-ups with the coaches, observe and confirm the exchange of the line-ups between coaches. (2003)
  - c. Obtain game ball from the Referee Box on the sidelines.
2. **Game Duties:**
  - a. Accompany captains from opposing teams to center of the field

- b. Conduct a coin toss
- c. Indicate to the sidelines the team starting offensive possession and the goals each team will defend.
- d. Officiate game
- e. Return game ball to the Referee Box at the conclusion of play.
- f. Collect the Line Up Sheets from each team, add comments, sign each sheet and place in RefereeBox on sidelines. (Added 2003)

**3. Game Clock:**

- a. The game clock will run continuously with the following exceptions:
  - 1. Two minute warning: Officials will notify each team coach on the field when five (5) minutes remain in each half. At this point the clock for game time will not be used and both teams will be informed that a total of five (5) plays (NOT per team) will be run before the half is ended. Point after touchdown does NOT count as one (1) of the five (5) plays. (Revised 2000)
  - 2. At any time, at the discretion of either official, when deemed necessary to fulfill the objectives of the flag program. (Revised 1998)

**4. Game Length Reduction:**

If necessary, a game will be reduced in length to avoid interfering with the start of another scheduled game.

**5. Authority of Officials:**

Officials have full authority of the game from the coin toss to the conclusion of play. Game officials are expected to contact the Flag Football Coordinator to report any gross misconduct by adults.

**6. Infraction Warnings:**

When an infraction is noted that does not have a direct bearing on the outcome of a play or does not pose a hazard to other players, a warning should be given to the offending player and his coach on the field. It should be explained that further infractions of this type would result in the calling of a penalty.

**7. Location on Field:**

One referee will be located at the side of the playing field near the line of scrimmage. The second referee will be located on the defensive side of the ball, at the center of the playing field behind the safety and at the hike of the ball he will move to the sideline opposite the other referee. (New 1998). The third referee, if used, will be located in the offensive backfield towards the side opposite the field from the first referee. (Added 2013)

**8. The Rules of the Game:**

**A. Time--There will be:**

- 1. Two (2) thirty (30) minute running clock halves.

2. Two (2) time-outs per half (one time out per team allotted) *(60) seconds per time-out. (Added 2000)*
3. The two-minute warning will be given at (25) minutes into each half.
4. Five (5) to Ten (10) minutes between halves depending on time permitting. (Revised 2003)

**B. Ball Position & Possession:**

1. There will be no kickoffs.
2. The referees will call the team captains together for the coin toss. The winner of the coin toss will elect to begin on offense, defense, or which goal to defend. If the winner chooses offense or defense, the losing captain will select which goal to defend. The team that starts on offense in the first half will be on defense in the second half. The direction of the goal to defend will be the opposite direction from the first half. There is no deferral for the 2<sup>nd</sup> half. (Added 2012)
3. The ball will be placed at the center of the field on the mid-field line (40-yard line). Play will begin once the ball has been placed.
4. Safety Situations--In the event of a safety, the team scoring the safety will assume offensive possession at the mid-field starting position.

**C. Ball in Play:**

1. A team will have 30 seconds to put the ball in play after the ready signal. (Revised 1998)

***Penalty: Five yards from the spot. Dead ball penalty.***

**D. Punting**

1. The offensive team may punt on any down.
  2. A punt is always a free kick.
  3. Punting intentions are announced to the referee by the captain, or acting captain.
- Penalty: 5 yards. Punt is repeated, or the receiving team may take the ball at the spot where the ball is declared dead.***
4. Rushing the punter is prohibited. No offensive or defensive player may move across the line of scrimmage until the kick has been made.
  5. Free Catch--There *can* be a free catch of a punt. The receiver shall signify his intentions for a free catch by waving his hand clearly over his head.

***Penalty: De-Flagging a receiver after a fair catch signal ---- 5 yards from the spot of the foul. Punt stands.***

***Penalty: Advancing a fair catch ---- 5 yards from fair catch spot.***

6. After being kicked, wherever the ball hits the ground it is considered a dead ball even if the receiving team touches it.

***Penalty: If the kicking or receiving team enters the neutral zone before the punt. 5 yards from the spot where the ball is declared dead after the kick or the punt can be taken over. (Revised 1998)***

7. The punting team must have at least 5 players on the LOS, the returning team must have a minimum of 3 players on the LOS. Offensive players cannot move until the ball is kicked. (Clarified 2007)

***Penalty: Less than five (5) players on the line of scrimmage for the offensive team ---- 5 yards from where the ball is declared dead after the kick or punt can be taken over. (Revised 8/2007)***

***Penalty: Less than three (3) players on the line of scrimmage for the defensive team ---- 5 yards from where the ball is declared dead after the kick or punt can be taken over. (Revised 8/2007)***

8. After being kicked, a ball that has not touched the ground is playable by the receiving team even if first touched by the kicking team. (Added 2013)

***Penalty: Kicking team deliberately interferes with the receiving teams attempt to field a kick (e.g., by intentionally batting or hitting the ball). 5 yards from the spot where the ball would have been caught or declared dead after hitting the ground or the punt can be taken over. (Added 2013)***

#### **E. Downs--- (First down and zone to go)**

1. The official's determination of any part of the ball crossing the goal line while being in complete control/possession of a player will be the determining factor for awarding a touchdown. (Revised 2015)
2. Each team will have four consecutive downs to advance the ball into the next zone or to score a touchdown. The 1<sup>st</sup> down marker does not move when loss of yardage due to penalty or play moves the line of scrimmage back to a previous zone. (Revised 2000)
3. Once a team enters into the next zone, it is a first down and a new series of downs begins.
4. A team failing to move the ball into the next zone will lose possession. The opposing team takes over at the point where the ball is declared dead and begins its series of first down and zone to go.
5. The official's determination of where the flag was removed will be the determining factor in measuring for a first down. (Revised 2015)
6. The official's determination of where the flag crossed the sideline will be the determining factor in measuring for ball placement (Revised 2015)
7. A down will be repeated if provided for by the rules. (See Penalties)
8. When the offensive team is within the last zone and has a first down, it will be first down and goal to go.
9. At the conclusion of each down, the referee will place the ball in the center of the field (equal distance from sidelines -- not on a hash mark).

#### **F. Formations:**

The offensive team must have four (4) players on the line and three (3) in the backfield. The guards are to be located one on each side of the center with a maximum distance from the center being 3 yards (head-to-head). The defensive team may choose any formation that is in accordance with the rushing rule. See VII, L. Rushing. (2002)

**Penalty: Illegal Formation – five yards from the previous spot. Repeat down.**

**G. Motion:**

Only players in the backfield can go in motion and only one player is permitted to go in motion per play. Player cannot be moving towards the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. (Clarified 2007)

**Penalty: Five yards from the previous spot. Repeat down**

**H. Offside:**

If the plane of the ball is broken by an offensive player the player is considered to be offside. If the plane of the 1-yard distance from the ball (neutral zone) is broken by a Defensive player the player is considered to be offside.

1. An offensive infraction results in a dead play and a penalty
2. A defensive infraction results in the play being completed and the offensive team having an option to accept or decline the penalty. If the penalty is taken the yardage is marked off from the original line of scrimmage and the play is run again.  
**Note:** If defensive infraction is whistled before the hike of the ball the play is dead and penalty is assessed. (Revised 1999)

**Penalty: Five yards from the previous spot**

**I. De-Flagging**

1. There shall be NO tackling or intentional tripping of the ball carrier or passer. (Revised 2012)

**Penalty: 10 yards from spot of the foul. Automatic first down.**

2. The player carrying or having possession of the ball is down when the flag is removed from player's waist (de-flagging). The defensive player shall hold the flag above their head and stand still. The ball is spotted where the ball is held when the flag is pulled.
3. Unnecessary roughness / illegal contact / intentional pushing. The defensive player cannot push the ball carrier to remove the flag. An accidental contact of the body or shoulder while reaching for the flag shall not be considered a violation; however, touching of the head, neck, or face shall be considered a violation.

**Penalty: 10 yards from spot of the foul. Automatic first down.**

4. Roughing the Passer: A defensive player may attempt to block the ball or go for the flag of the passer. If any contact of the passer is made by the defensive player in an attempt to block a pass, it is a roughing the passer penalty. (Revised 2011)

**Penalty: 10 yards from the line of scrimmage. Automatic first down.**

5. A defensive player cannot block or hold a ball carrier

**Penalty: 5 yards from spot of the foul. Yardage and down stands.**

6. A defensive player cannot block or push a potential receiver out-of-bounds. (Added 8/20/00)

**Penalty: 5 yards from previous spot. Down is repeated.**

7. A defensive player may not strip or attempt to take the ball away from the ball carrier.

**Penalty: 10 yards from spot of the foul. Yardage and down stand.**

8. A defensive player cannot block or hold an offensive non-ball carrier

**Penalty: 5 yards from previous spot. Automatic first down. (Added 2013)**

#### J. Blocking

1. Blockers must be on their feet at all times while blocking. All offensive players, except the center & QB, must simply stand with their hands on their knees, feet square, and in a set position to await the snap.(Exception, see Motion VII.6.F) (Revised 2007)

**Penalty: Five yards from the spot of the foul. Down is repeated**

2. Cross body and roll blocking are not permitted.

**Penalty: Ten yards from the spot of the foul. Down is repeated**

3. A blocker cannot use their hands. **In the Intermediate and Senior Divisions only**, a blocker may use their hands under the following provisions:

- a. As long as contact is kept only within the upper torso. Contact of the neck, head, face, and arms will result in a penalty.
- b. Hands have to be open.
- c. The hand(s) or arm(s) shall not be used to hook, clamp or otherwise illegally impede or illegally obstruct an opponent.
- d. Hands have to stay within the upper frame of both offensive and defensive players (no arms out to the side or hooking players). (2010)

**Penalty: Five yards from the spot of the foul. Down is repeated**

4. Blocking shall be done with the arms and body in the form of shoulder and brush blocking only In the Junior Division, the blocker must keep the hands in and against their chest. (2000)

**Penalty: Five yards from the spot of the foul. Down is repeated**

5. Butting, elbowing, or knee blocking is not permitted.

**Penalty: Ten yards from the spot of the foul. Down is repeated**



6. Blocking a player from behind is not permitted (clipping).

***Penalty: Ten yards from the spot of the foul. Down is repeated***

7. There will be no interlocked blocking.

***Penalty: Five yards from the spot of the foul. Down stands.***

8. A defensive player will be restricted in the use of his hands to the blocker's body and shoulders. A defensive player cannot intentionally push a blocker down.

***Penalty: Five yards from the previous spot. Down is repeated***

9. The blocking zone is defined as the area between the defender's waist and shoulders, confined to the front and sides of the body. Blocking outside of this area is an illegal block.

***Penalty: Five yards from the spot of the foul. Down is repeated***

10. On a pass play blocking is only allowed within (3) yards downfield until the pass reception is made or the passer crosses the line of scrimmage. (Added 8/20/00)

***Penalty: Five yards from the previous spot. Down is repeated***

#### **K. Ball Carrier**

A note on all Ball Carrier penalties: For most penalties, the location of the flag pull at the end of the play, including any penalties that are assessed, determines whether a first down has been made. However, in the case of ball carrier violations (listed directly below) the point of the infraction is used to determine whether a first down has been made. For example, if a player crosses the line to gain, but then guards his flags and this penalty moves the ball back across the line to gain, it will be considered a first down and the offensive team will have two lines to gain. **(Clarified 2008)**

1. The ball carrier cannot use their hands or arms to protect their flags. The defensive player must have the opportunity to remove the ball carrier's flags.

***Penalty: 5 yards from point of infraction. Down Stands.***

2. The ball carrier cannot use their heads to drive or run into defensive players.

***Penalty: 10 yards from point of infraction. Down Stands.***

3. Stiff-arming by the ball carrier is illegal.

***Penalty: 10 yards from point of infraction. Down Stands.***

4. The ball carrier is not permitted to dive or hurdle. There is no penalty for falling (Added 2001 Revised (2012)

***Penalty: 5 yards from point of infraction. Down Stands.***

5. ~~Spinning~~, continuous jumping, or hopping is not permitted It is permissible in the course of making a cut, juke or change of direction, for a runner to momentarily leave his feet. For clarification, spinning is defined as any full rotation by a player. Jumping vertically to avoid a flag pull is illegal. (Revised 2011/12) \*Spinning is allowed (Revised 2020)

**Penalty: 5 yards from point of infraction. Down Stands.**

6. Ball carriers may run in any direction until the ball is declared dead.
7. Charging by the ball carrier is not allowed. A runner shall not charge into, nor contact an opponent in the runner's path, nor attempt to run between two opponents or between an opponent and a sideline, unless the space allows a reasonable chance for the runner to go through without contact. If a runner in her/his progress has established a straight-line path, the runner may not be crowded out of that path, but if an opponent is able to legally establish a defensive position in that path, the runner must avoid contact by changing direction. (Added 2001)

**Penalty: 5 yards from point of infraction. Down Stands.**

8. A player cannot wear the flags illegally

**Penalty: 5 yards from point of infraction. Down Stands**

9. Belt must be cinched tight with the flags located at the hips. (added 2015)

**Penalty: 5 yards from point of infraction. Down Stands**

10. Wearing only one flag

**Penalty: Dead ball at point of possession.**

#### **L. Center:**

1. The center must snap the ball between his legs to a player in the backfield who takes full possession.

**Penalty: Illegal snap 5 yards. Repeat down.**

**Penalty: Snapping a ball to a lineman ---- 5 yards. Repeat down.**

2. The center must have both feet on the scrimmage line with no part of his body beyond the forwardpoint of the ball.
3. Center may adjust the long part of the ball at right angles to the scrimmage line for one time only.
4. Fumble Rooskie is not allowed, meaning an offensive lineman must turn at least 90 Degrees and move to the backfield before he is eligible to accept a handoff. (Ruled1998, Added 2000, Revised 2003)

#### **M. Rushing**

1. Maximum of 2 (2)-man rush.
2. The players designated as the rushers (Defensive Ends) will wear specially designated wrist bands for ease of recognition and only those players will be permitted to rush.
3. The Defensive Ends are to line up directly on the guard or on the outside shoulder of the guard

Examples of Rushing Formation Designated Rushers are <b>BOLD X's</b>											
<b>OK</b>	X	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	X		<b>NO</b>	X	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	X	X
	O	O	O	O			O	O	O	O	O
<b>OK</b>	X	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	X	<b>NO</b>	X	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	X
	O	O	O	O			O	O	O	O	O
<b>OK</b>	X	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	X		<b>NO</b>	X	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	X
		1 yard	→								
			<b>Ball</b>				O	O	O	O	<b>Ball</b>
	O	O	O	O							O

(Revised 1999)

***(Senior Division) Penalty: Illegal formation on the defense Offense option to keep play or 5 yards and repeat of down.(2014)***

***Intermediate and Junior: Referees will attempt to align offensive and defensive players prior to the snap to assist in the player’s learning development of the game. Excessive need to adjust players may result in an illegal formation (or delay of game) penalty at the discretion of the referee. (2014)***

4. Defensive Ends are to be set in position before the hike of the ball with their hands on their knees.(Revised 2017)
5. The defensive players must line up a minimum of one (1) yard from the line of scrimmage to maintain a neutral zone. The (1) yard distance may be increased by the Referee to help maintain parity when a team is overmatched, especially in the Junior Division where a strong rush can prevent the offensive team to get a play off. (Added 11/4)
6. Two defenders may not line up in the same hole. Once the ball is snapped the defenders are free to go in any hole or any direction as long as they honor the Rushing Rule. (Clarified 8/6)
7. In addition to the nose guard and the defensive ends being permitted to line up on the line of scrimmage, defensive players can line up directly on the receivers but no more than a total of five (5)defensive players may line up on the line of scrimmage.
8. At no time is blitzing permitted
9. Defensive linemen must not **initiate** contact with the center. Any defensive lineman rushing into the middle of the offensive line should choose a gap. The player at the center position is considered protected from any aggressive contact by the defensive line. (added 2015)
10. All defenders are eligible to cross the line of scrimmage once any of the following occurs:
  - a) The quarterback moves out of the pocket (the pocket is defined as an area between the guards).
  - b) The ball changes possession from the quarterback to another player.
  - c) The ball leaves the quarterback’s possession (throw, pitch, toss)

**For clarity:** If the offense conducts a fake handoff or pump fake ONLY the 2 linemen with wrist bands are eligible to cross the line of scrimmage until one of the conditions above are met.

***Penalty: Ineligible defender crossing the line of scrimmage 5 yards and repeat of down. (2014)***

#### **N. Passing**

1. All players are eligible passers and receivers.
2. Passing will be attempted from behind the line of scrimmage only.

***Penalty: Passer crossed the line of scrimmage ---- 5 yards and loss of down.***

3. A lateral pass is a pass thrown parallel to the line of scrimmage or back toward the passer's own goalline.
4. A forward pass is a pass thrown from behind the line of scrimmage toward the defensive team's goalline.

***Penalty: If an illegal forward pass is thrown and intercepted, the play will continue until the ball is declared dead. The intercepting team has the option of possession from that spot or accepting the penalty ---- 5 yards from previous spot, loss of down***

5. More than one forward pass may be thrown on any down until the ball passes the line of scrimmage. (Added 2001)
6. Bump & Run is only allowed in the Senior Division and only until the ball leaves the passer's hand.

***Penalty: 5 yards from point of infraction in Juniors & Intermediate (8/20/00)***

7. Other Passing Penalties:

***Penalty: Intentional grounding: Throwing the ball intentionally away from eligible receivers (under any circumstances). 5 yards from point of infraction and loss of down. (Revised 2012)***

***Penalty: Offensive pass interference ---- 10 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down.***

***Penalty: Defensive pass interference ---- First down from spot of infraction.***

***Penalty: Pushing a potential receiver out of bounds ---- 5 yards or play and yardage stand if offensive team declines the penalty. Added (8/20/00)***

#### **O. Receiving**

1. All players are eligible to receive forward passes.
2. A pass is considered complete as long as the receiver is able to touch one foot in bounds.
3. Two or more receivers may touch a ball in succession resulting in a completed pass.
4. If an offensive and defensive player catches a pass simultaneously, the ball is declared dead at the spot of the catch and the passing team is awarded possession. (This is intended to prevent injury do to players fighting for the ball.)

5. An offensive player cannot be out-of-bounds and return in-bounds to catch a pass. This will be ruled an incomplete pass. Unless the receiver is deliberately pushed out of bounds by a defender, then the offensive team will choose to accept the penalty or the reception and yardage gained. (Added 8/20/00)

**P. Dead Ball**

All balls touching the ground are immediately dead. For example, the ball is declared dead at the following times:

1. When the ball carrier touches the ground with his body, other than his hands or feet.
2. When the ball carrier's flag has been pulled.
3. If a pass receiver or ball carrier has a missing flag (ball is dead at that spot).
4. Following a touchdown, safety or touchback.
5. When the ball goes out-of-bounds for any reason.
6. If the center snap hits the ground before a backfield player has control of the ball, the ball is placed back at the line of scrimmage for the start of the next play. (2000)

**Exception:** If the offensive team has declared an intention to punt and the center snap hits the ground. The ball is not dead. The punter may pick up the ball and proceed with play. No other player, offensive or defensive may move until the ball has been punted.

7. When the ball hits the ground as a result of a fumble or muffed ball. **THERE ARE NO FUMBLE RECOVERIES IN PJFL.**
8. If a lateral pass touches the ground (ball is declared dead at that point). If a lateral pass goes out-of-bounds, the ball is ruled dead at the point it crosses the boundary line.
9. If a forward pass strikes the ground or is caught at the same time by an opposing player(s).
10. When the ball hits the ground after a punt the ball is dead at that point.
11. A free catch (cannot be advanced)

**Q. Parity Rule**

When one team is ahead by three (3) touchdowns (18 points), the opposing team will start offensive possessions on the 30-yard line of the team that is in the lead. They need only to advance 10 yards, to opposing team's 20-yard line for a first down and goal to go. When one team is ahead by four (4) touchdowns (24 points), they will start their offensive possessions from no better than their own 30-yardline, and will need to reach the opposition's 20-yard Line for a 1<sup>st</sup> and goal to go. (2000)

**EXAMPLES:**

Red team has scored its third touchdown and leads Blue Team 18-0. Blue Team takes offensive possession on Red Team's 30-yard line. Blue team advances 10 yards to red team's 20-yard line for first down and goal to go. Red Team scores its fourth touchdown and leads Blue Team 24-0. Blue Team takes offensive possession on the Red Team's 30-yard line. Red Team's defense drives back the

Blue Team's offense to mid-field on 4<sup>th</sup> down. The game official will spot the ball back to the Red Team's 30-yard line for the Redteam to take possession. The Red Team must advance 30 yards for a 1st down.

**R. Scoring Values:**

<u>Action</u>	<u>Value</u>
Touchdown	6 points
Safety	2 points

Point after touchdown

- Any Forward Pass 2 point
- Running 1 point

**S. Tie Game:**

Tie games will go into the record as such and will not be played off in regular season play.

**T. All-star Game:**

There will be no all-star game for this division.

**U. Injured Players:**

**1. Removed Player:**

If a player is removed from the game due to a minor injury please try to get the player back into the game as soon as possible to maintain the integrity of the equal play rules. The temporary substitute will be a player that was scheduled to play the least quarters. (Corrected 8/06)

**2. Injured Player:**

If a player is injured resulting in a stoppage of the game, the injured player must sit out at least one play. Coaches must adhere to the mandatory play rule (VII D) when substituting for the injured player. (Added 2012)

**V. Game Schedule:**

The league will provide each team with their season schedule. Please review and make any change requests to the league. Once the schedule is finalized the league will not be able to edit the schedule.

In the event that any games are canceled by the league the game can be played on a weekday (and not violate the practice rules) if all the following conditions are met:

1. Only games canceled by PJFL apply. Schedule conflicts or short players are not eligible.
2. Both teams agree on a mutual date and location
  - a. Cannot play make-up game AND full practice on same day
  - b. Game cannot be played on a Saturday or Sunday
3. Game consists of 30 minute warm up and maximum of 60 minutes of game time with 10 minute half time break. (Event time = 1hour 40 minutes total)
4. One coach from each team will referee the game according to PFJL rules
5. Game must be reported to league prior to the game along with line up sheets submitted (2014)

**W. Other Penalties:**

The offended team will always have the choice of accepting or declining a penalty. If the penalty is declined, the down will remain the same as if no infraction occurred. Also, when the penalty is greater than the distance to the goal line, the penalty shall be half the distance to the goal line.

**1. Delay of Game:**

- a. Continuing to play after the ball is dead.

**Penalty: 5 yards from spot where ball is dead.**

- b. Recovering a fumble or falling on the ball

**Penalty: 5 yards**

- c. Unnecessary delay of game for any reason. Plays are to be called, huddles broke, and ball snapped within 45 seconds of the ball being spotted.

**Penalty: 5 yards and repeat down.**

**Intermediate and Junior: Effort will be made to keep the pace of the game moving. However, referees will use discretion prior to calling a delay of game penalty at these levels.**

- d. Equipment violation: any player not having mouth guard.

**Penalty** Player replaced for 1 play, 5 yards repeat down. Player replacement rules follow the same playing time guidelines as an injured player.

- e. Disruptive behavior/activity: any activity that in the referee's opinion impedes the natural flow of the game. (examples, continual flag loss without being pulled, excessive need for referee player alignment (intermediate only).(2014)

**2. Illegal Hand-Off:**

- a. Ball is handed forward beyond the scrimmage line

**Penalty: 5 yards from the spot and loss of down.**

**3. Unnecessary Roughness:**

- a. Offensive and defensive
- b. No player (offense or defense) shall intentionally push an opposing player to the ground. (added 2015)

**Penalty: 10 yards.**

- c. Disqualification of guilty player or players if repeated.

**4. Unsportsmanlike Conduct:**

- a. Fighting

**Penalty: 10 yards and offenders ejected from game.**

- b. Defensive player intentionally pulling offensive player's flag to make the player ineligible for

play

**Penalty: 10 yards. (Revised 2007)**

- c. Insulting and abusive language

**Penalty: 10 yards.**

- d. Interference with progress of the game by coaches or any other team personnel

**Penalty: 10 yards.**

## 5. Coaching Conduct

- a. Illegal play

**Penalty 10 yards. (Revised 2007)**

- b. Team leaving field before game is completed

**Penalty: 10 yards.**

**Failure to return ---- Forfeit - Win for team remaining on field.**

- c. Failure of either team to control their players or fans

**Penalty: 10 yards, forfeit if not controlled after warning.**

- d. Trick Plays. Any play which is a "trick play" (e.g. sleeper play, "hey coach, what's the play") will be considered Unsportsmanlike Conduct. These plays violate the spirit of what we try to achieve in PJFL - that kids have fun learning and playing the game of football in a fair and balanced manner. Coaches should not run any type of "trick play" and consider any play that includes an adult coach participating in the ruse especially forbidden. We must accept that all kids on the field are going to listen to an adult authority figure and we cannot have them influencing the play. (Added 2008)

Variations of a wildcat formation are not considered 'trick plays' unless the Quarterback attempts to add deception by communicating with anyone while in motion. (Added 2010)

- e. **Coaching:**

**The 20/20 rule is a League sanctioned penalty only. (Added 2000)** The Penalty will apply at the start of Each Half. When starting the half on Offense, the penalized team will start the half with the Ball at their own 20-yard line, with 1st down and 40 yards to gain for the next 1<sup>st</sup> Down. When starting the half on Defense, the ball will be placed on the penalized Team's own 20- yard line, with 1st and goal for the Offensive team.

## X. Protests: This League has no protests. (Added 2001)

## Y. Rule Interpretations:

Only interpretation requests involving rules or the eligibility of a player shall be considered; never the judgment of an official in calling a play



## Penalty Summary

	<b>Repeat Down. Original Spot (LOS)</b>	<b>Yards</b>
<b>Offensive</b>	Delay of Game (60 seconds)	5 YDS
	illegal Formation	5 YDS
	Illegal Motion	5 YDS
	Illegal Snap	5 YDS
<b>Defensive</b>	Block/Push Receiver Out of Bounds	5 YDS
	Illegal Rushing	5 YDS
<b>General</b>		
	More than 8 players on field	5 YDS
	Substitution while ball is in play	5 YDS
	Disqualified / ineligible player entering game	5 YDS
	Coaches not in proper position	10 YDS
	<b>Spot of Foul - Yardage &amp; Down Stand</b>	
<b>Defense</b>	Defensive Holding of Ball Carrier (Clarified 2013)	5 YDS
	Stripping	10 YDS
	<b>Spot of Foul -Repeat Down</b>	
<b>Offense</b>	Illegal Offensive Stance	5 YDS
	Cross body/Roll Block	10 YDS
	Blocking w/hands (Junior Division)	5 YDS
	Butting/Elbow/Knee Blocking	10 YDS
	Interlocking Blocking	5 YDS
	Intentional Push (defense)	5 YDS
	Blocking outside of zone (between waist & shoulders)	5 YDS
	Illegal Block Downfield (passing)	5 YDS
<b>Defense</b>	Bump & Run (Junior/Intermediate)	5 YDS
	<b>Dead Ball Foul</b>	
<b>Offense</b>	Ball in Play infraction. 30 seconds after ready signal	5 YDS
	Offensive Offsides	5 YDS
<b>Defense</b>	Neutral Zone Violation (defensive offsides)	5 YDS
	(of if play is run, choice to accept or decline)	

	<b>Original Spot (LOS) - Loss of Down</b>	
<b>Offense</b>	Passing beyond LOS	5 YDS
	Illegal forward Pass (unless intercepted)	5 YDS
	Offensive Pass Interference	10 YDS
	<b>Point of Infraction - Loss of Down</b>	
<b>Offense</b>	Intentional Grounding	5 YDS
	Illegal Hand-Off	5 YDS
	<b>Point Where Ball Is Dead. Down Stands</b>	
<b>General</b>	Delay of Game - continuing play	5 YDS
	Delay of Game - falling on fumble	5 YDS
	<b>Original Line of Scrimmage - Automatic First Down</b>	
<b>Defense</b>	Roughing the Passer	10 YDS
<b>Defense</b>	Defensive Holding of Offensive non-Ball Carrier	5 YDS

### Penalty Summary (continued)

	<b>Down Stands</b>	<b>Yards</b>
<b>Special Teams</b>	Punt Neutral Zone	5 YDS at point of ball hits ground, or re-kick
	Less than 5 offensive players on LOS on Punt	5 YDS where ball is declared dead, or re-kick
	Less than 3 defensive players on LOS on Punt	5 YDS where ball is declared dead, or re-kick
<b>General</b>	Fighting (Ejections)	10 YDS
	Intentional Flag Full w/o ball	10 YDS
	Insulting of Abusive Language	10 YDS
	Coaching Interference of Progress of Game	10 YDS
	Illegal Play	10 YDS
	Team Leaving Field of Play During Game	10 YDS
	Failure to Control Players & Fans	10 YDS
	Mandatory Play Rule Violation	10 YDS
	<b>Point of Infraction - Automatic First Down</b>	
<b>General</b>	Tackling / Intentional Tripping	10 YDS
	Unnecessary Roughness	10 YDS
	Defensive Pass Interference	
	<b>Point of Infraction - Down Stands</b>	

<b>Offense</b>	Ball Carrier - Flag Guarding	5 YDS
	Ball Carrier -head or ramming	10 YDS
	Ball Carrier – Stiff-arming	10 YDS
	Ball Carrier-Diving or Hurdling	5 YDS
	Ball Carrier- Jumping	5 YDS
	Ball Carrier-Charging	5 YDS
	Ball Carrier- Illegal Flag Wear	5 YDS
	Ball Carrier-Flag Loss	
	Flag Body Position	5 YDS
	Flag Length/Width Violation	5 YDS
	Flag Cinching	5 YDS
	Improper securing of flags	5 YDS
<b>Special Teams</b>	Advancing fair catch	5 YDS
	De-flagging after fair catch	5 YDS