



LAST UPDATED 9/1/2025

A7FL 7v7 CONTACT FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

Format.....	1
The Field.....	1
Official Football.....	1
Flags.....	1
Timing.....	2
League Standings.....	3
Rosters:.....	3
Attire.....	3
Start of Games.....	3
Offensive Rules.....	4
Defensive Play.....	6
Special Teams Play.....	6
Sportsmanship and Penalties.....	7
Overtime:.....	8



Format:

A7FL 7 Man Contact (7v7), 3 on 1 Throw-off (no kicking), No center snap.

The Field:

The dimensions of the field are flexible between 120 yds X 37 yds down to 60 yds. x 30 yds. There will always be 10-yard endzones. Field Size subject to change per league/tournament venue.

Official Football:

A7FL Official football (NFL Regulation size ball – adult). Available via a7flshop.com.

Flags:

Authorized Flags are Triple Threat, any other flags need to be presented to the league director for approval. General guidelines: flags should be made of the same material and color as the socket, and should not have sharp edges. Flags should be removable from the belt. Flags should not be altered in length or width, and should not have tape on them.

Altered or tampered flags in any way could result in an ejection or forfeit. No shortening, cutting, etc. Youth size flags may not be worn in adult leagues / tournaments.

*** The director will make a final ruling if challenged. If the director determines that the flag was tampered or altered, he / she will determine if the player is ejected from the game. There will also be a 15-yard unsportsmanlike penalty and loss or down (offense) or automatic first down (defense).

Timing:

Duration of Games: Regulation clock is 40 minutes long. Two 20-minute halves and a 3-minute halftime. Final Two Minutes of each Half will enforce Regulation Timing Rules (NFL Clock). 2 Timeouts per half (30 seconds). If a time out is called after a TD the clock will not run until the change of possession and the offense snaps the ball. Clock does not stop in the First Half unless a timeout is used or a referee stoppage.



Rental Time Rule – if in the event the game is delayed impacting rental time, the referee will give a Game Stoppage warning at 5 minutes to the top of the hour. If game is not at its 2-minute warning, the game will be accelerated to the 2-minute warning. There will be no stopped time unless timeouts are taken by teams.

Play Clock: The offensive team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Clock resets when the marker is spotted, or when the official sounds ready for play whistle (Officials will warn the offense when there are 10 seconds left to snap the ball). Teams must wait until the referees are set or a referee acknowledges they are prepared to start the play. The clock will not stop unless a team calls a time out, a referee stoppage or an injured player with the exception of the last minute of regulation explained below. The referees will warn the team 1 minute before the half is about to expire, but the clock will not stop.

Mercy Rule:

Tournaments

No Mercy Rule during pool play games.

If a team is up by 14 points or more during tournament play at the 1-minute warning in the second half the game will be called.

Leagues

Mercy Rule is applied when 14 points or more separate the two teams. Clock can only be stopped by timeouts. Game will play without the pro clock for the final two minutes.

Tournament Standings:

Overall record.

Rosters:

Each team is allowed 20 designated roster spots in 7v7 format. Rosters must be turned in prior to your team's first game. All participants must be rostered and registered players for the tournament.

Teams may add and drop players prior to the roster deadline but shall not exceed roster limits. If a team has more than 20 players in attendance to their game or is on their roster the opposing team can elect which player is not eligible to play.

Roster Challenge – teams may question rosters at the beginning of a game. If a roster is challenged the challenging team must also have their roster reviewed. If a player comes into a game late, they must check in with an official prior to play. Any player who does not do this is ineligible regardless of if they are on a roster.



Attire:

Same color shirts are mandatory – you do not need numbers or matching logos; you only need the same color shirt.

Referees reserve the right to negate touchdowns or remove players from the game if they are not following our uniform rules.

Molded Cleats, and Turf Shoes are permitted. Metal Cleats are not.

Pocketless Shorts are required, players are ineligible without them.

Start of Games:

Game time is forfeit time. Your team is required to be properly equipped and, on the field, ready to play when the referee blows the whistle to start the game. Start of games occurs with the away team calling the coin-toss prior to the flip to decide who gets possession of the ball first. The winner of the coin-toss will have the option to defer, return the A7FL 3-on-1, or direction. If direction is taken, the winner elects to forfeit the choice of possession.

The throwing team will have 3 defensive players and the receiving team will have 1 offensive player to make the return. For the throwing team, the player throwing the ball may utilize a running start but must throw the ball before crossing the front of their own endzone and the 2 runners must be set behind the front of the endzone line and may only start running downfield once the ball is thrown.

The returner can make an attempt to bat the ball back in from the field of play from in bounds, recover the bat, and continue as a returner.

Any recovery by the throwing team (of a live ball) under no circumstance can be advanced.

The offensive team has three plays to cross mid-field (first down).

If they are unable to convert, they can elect to 3-on-1 punt or go for the goal.

If a team elects to punt, they must punt in accordance with the A7FL 3 on 1 special team rules. Any recovery by the throwing team (of a live ball) under no circumstance can be advanced.

- To start each half (and after every score), the throwing team will throw the ball off from either behind their own 35 yard line (long length fields) or behind the front of their own endzone (short length fields).



If the team elects to go for it and fails, then it is a change of possession at the result of the play. Once a team crosses mid-field, they get a renewed set of downs.

Penalties that result in a first down will give the offense 4 more plays to achieve mid-field (first down) or if the penalty puts the line of scrimmage past mid-field, then 4 plays to score.

Teams may start play with a minimum of 5 players on the field.

Coaches and Players: Coaches and players must stay out of the restricted areas. The restricted areas are inside the 5-yard line of the endzone

Offensive Rules:

CONTACT IS ALLOWED: Open hand contact allowed between shoulder and waist

Scoring: Extra points are worth 1 from the 5 or 2 from the 10. Extra points can be returned and the team returning if they score, will be awarded point for point.

Rushing the QB: Players may rush from anywhere as long as any part of their body is not across the LOS.

Running: All offensive players may run the ball at any time, except in the no-run zones which are located 5 yards before mid-field and 5 yards before the goal line only in the direction that the offense is going.

Crackback and Blindside Blocking: Crackback Blocking and Blindside blocking is NOT allowed. Crack-back block is a blind-side block on a player by an opponent who starts downfield and then cuts back toward her own goal line to make contact. A blind-side block is engaging an opponent other than the runner who does not see the blocker approaching.

Spot of the Ball: The spot of the ball will be where the ball is when the player is deflagged. To avoid a safety, the ball must be COMPLETELY out of the end zone when the player is deflagged. If the runner's flag is pulled simultaneously to reaching the goal, the ball will be spotted short of the goal. Touchdowns are awarded when the ball has clearly broken the plane of the endzone.

Blocking Down Field: Blocking downfield is only allowed once the ball is completed downfield. Players may block downfield for all running plays or when the pass is behind the LOS except when the LOS is established inside the no run zone. Offensive players blocking downfield before the ball is thrown downfield will be assessed a pass interference penalty (5 yards from the LOS).



Inadvertent Whistle: At the time of the inadvertent whistle, the team with the possession of the ball, has the option of replaying the down or the result of the play. If the inadvertent whistle happens while the ball is in the air, the play is dead and the down will be replayed from the original LOS. If a penalty marker is thrown prior to the inadvertent whistle, the accepted penalty will be administered as in any other play situation. When the foul is accepted, the inadvertent whistle is disregarded.

Quarterback: QB's must become set for at least 1 second before snapping the ball. A QB may not spin the ball in their hands after starting their cadence.

Prior to the start of each play, the quarterback must be set (the same as the offensive lineman and receivers). If the QB moves early (rolls before cadence), his team will be assessed a 5 yard penalty.

All quarterback cadences must consist of 3 sounds and the offense can move on any of the 3 sounds. For example if the cadence is "Down, Set, Go" the offense can go on either "Down," "Set," or "Go" but there is no going on 2 or trying to draw the defense offsides. These 3 sounds for a cadence can be whatever the offense chooses, though it cannot change over the course of the game. Even if a new QB comes into the game the cadence must remain the same.

Fumbles: Dead at the spot. If a player pitches the ball or is running and the ball pops out legally (not punched out), the ball is live and can be caught by the defensive team and advanced. Result will be a change of possession.

Intentional Grounding: This is defined in flag as the QB throwing the ball away to avoid a sack. Intentional Grounding can occur ANYWHERE behind the LOS. The ball must be thrown in the direction of any player. The QB can spike the ball within 1 minute of the 2nd half to stop the clock, but he/she must catch the snap and throw it to the ground immediately. Intentional Grounding is a spot foul and loss of down.

All Offensive Penalties Behind the LOS: Will be assessed from the LOS except Flag Guarding which will be assessed from the spot of the foul or 10 yards from the LOS whichever is deemed to be considered the greater loss of yardage. Flag guarding or holding in the endzone will result in safety.

Motion: Only one player can be in motion at the snap of the ball. Players can move lateral in motion to the LOS but are not to move vertical before the ball is snapped.

Line of Scrimmage (LOS): Two offensive players are required to be on the LOS. A defensive player is not permitted to attempt to draw the offense offside either verbally or physically. A defender may jump offsides and attempt to get back onside before the snap.

The offense must line up with at least 2 down lineman, who are ineligible to receive a pass, and a quarterback, all of whom must start each play from a set position. The 2 offensive



linemen must be on the line of scrimmage with a split no wider than 1 yard. The quarterback must split the difference between his linemen while in shotgun or lined up closer to the line of scrimmage.

Receiving: All players are eligible to receive a pass, including the original quarterback, only if the ball has been pitched back or handed off (backwards) behind the line of scrimmage. Players must have at least two feet in bounds when making a catch. Players that run out of bounds during a play cannot be the first player to touch the ball when attempting to make a catch unless the player is forced out of bounds, he/she then must first re-establish his position in bounds before he can touch the ball. Players must have at least 2 feet inbounds when catching the ball in order for it to ruled a completion. If a receiver and defender catch a ball and there is no clear possessor of the ball the ruling of the catch goes to the offense.

Play is ruled dead when: The offensive player's flag is pulled. Ball carrier steps out of bounds, touchdown is scored, the ball carriers' knee touches the ground, an incomplete pass and/or anytime the ball hits the ground. If a player loses a flag unintentionally, the defense only has to touch the ball carrier with one hand, not pull the flag.

No Flags on to start the play: Players can have no flags on, but are one hand touch, until they have three flags on their belt.

Diving: Diving is permitted. However, players must dive in an area in which the player does not have an established position. Contact with an established defender will result in a bull rush call.

Handoff, Pitch or Throwback: Teams may handoff, pitch, or throw back the football in the backfield. The player who receives the pitch or handoff (backwards) may throw the ball as long as he is not beyond the line of scrimmage. Unlimited pitching (backwards) behind or beyond the LOS is allowed.

Passing: A forward pass does not have to cross the line of scrimmage to be a legal play. In 7v7 you may have only 1 forward pass behind the line of scrimmage. All forward passes must be thrown behind the LOS. The player's entire body along with the ball must be over the LOS for it to be considered illegal. 5 yards from the spot and LOD.

If a QB throwing motion is simultaneous to the pull, the determination is the ball is away and goes to the benefit of the thrower.

A QB may throw the ball away if an eligible receiver is in the area, or to an area where there is no eligible receiver if under duress and outside the hashes. In the latter situation the ball must cross the LOS. If neither of the above are met its intentional grounding. 5 yards from the spot and LOD.



Defensive Play:

Defensive Rushing: Rush is a live rush off the snap. Rushers may use a variety of tactics to rush, bull rush, swim move, rip moves, and spin moves. On the bull rush on initial contact initial contact is permitted but defenders will be flagged if they are running through a player to get to the ball carrier. Defenses may rush as many players as they wish and blitz at any time.

Interceptions: Interceptions may be returned except during extra point attempts.

Jamming of the Receiver: Defensive players can Jam the receiver at the line and up to 5 yards downfield. However, you cannot hold, trip or grab the receiver. You can push a receiver out of bounds on a jam but give them the ability to come back into the field of play.

Pushing the runner out of bounds: Defenders can push a runner out under the following guidelines. Defenders should continue to go for the flag while pushing a player out. Push is only legal when done at the waist. Any shove outs above the waist will be deemed unnecessary roughness.

Contact to the QB: Rushers may rush the QB right off the snap of the ball.

Can go for the flag, at the hips, waist, and upper legs. Contact may be made in these areas.

Attempting to block a pass, rusher may not make any contact to the arm, shoulder, neck, face or upper torso of the QB. The ball must be cleared of the throwers hand and contact cannot be made to the QB even if the ball is cleared.

Last man rule:

If a player(s) or coach(s) leaves the sideline and disrupts the play or the offensive player from scoring, the offensive team may be awarded a touchdown

If the last defensive player physically contains the ball carrier (e.g., bear hugs, aggressively holds, tackles, attempts to tackle, etc.) without making a clear, legal attempt to pull the ball carrier's flag, the offensive team will be awarded a touchdown.

Special Teams Play:

Punting:

Punts are permitted in 7v7, teams who are punting must physically throw the ball in the A7FL 3 on 1 format. There are no fake punts.

There is no rush to the punter.



Offense cannot move until the ball is punted.

On the return the ball is live until it touches the ground, the ball is down on initial contact.

If returned the play is live until the returner is deflagged, runs out of bounds or is down on the ground.

Punts are assessed a 5 yard penalty when punted out of bounds – illegal punt

When a punt occurs, a stoppage on the parallel field will occur until the punt is cleared.

Sportsmanship and Penalties:

Sportsmanship / Roughing:

Unnecessary Roughness 10 yards automatic 1st down.

Unsportsmanlike Penalties 10 yards automatic 1st Down

- o Players can be benched for a series (offense and defense) by officials' determination.
- o Captains encouraging unsportsmanlike play – forfeiture of game.

Instigating a fight – ejection, possible banning.

Throwing a punch, slap, kick or other act deemed as a form of assault and battery toward another player – ejected immediately and banned indefinitely.

Unsportsmanlike behavior toward officials – name calling, disrespectful, contact to an official or threats to the official will not be tolerated. – ejection from the game and review for suspensions and banning.

Penalties:

Procedural Penalties

- o False Start – 5 yards replay down
- o Offsides – 5 yards replay down
- o Illegal Procedure – 5 yard replay the down.
- o Holding
 - Offense– 5 yards, replay of down
 - Defense – 5 yards, automatic first
 - Encroachment – 5 yards replay down
- o Pass Interference
 - Offense – 5 yards replay down
 - Defense – 10 yards first down from LOS
- o Strip Foul – 5-yard penalty spot foul, automatic first
- o Delay of game – 5-yard penalty replay down



Safety Penalties and Unsportsmanlike Penalties

- o Roughing the passer – 10-yard penalty, automatic first down
- o Unsportsmanlike Conduct – 10-yard penalty automatic first down
- o Unnecessary roughness- 10-yard penalty automatic first down

Overtime:

Overtime only occurs in playoffs.

Home Team gets the coin flip which determines first possession.

1st Overtime – Each team will receive the ball at the PAT Line. Initial team who won the toss can elect to go for 1 point or two. The second team must go for the win if the first team was successful on 1 point try. If both teams points are tied then teams swap offensive possession and try again, with the loser of the coin toss starting first in the 2nd OT. If neither team scores on their possession in the 2nd OT the team that advanced the ball down the field the furthest wins in the 3rd OT.

A turnover (fumble or interception) during a conversion attempt cannot be advanced. can not be returned on an extra point attempt. The first team to score must go for 1pt try. Second team to score must go for the extra point if the first team's PAT was unsuccessful, if successful, the second team must go for 2pts.