BRACKET HOUSE LEAGUES

5v5 Flag Football Rulebook

Official Rules and Tournament Procedures

This document is intended to guide players, captains, referees, and tournament staff. Bracket House Leagues reserves final authority over rule interpretations, safety decisions, discipline, and tournament operations.

1. Tournament Overview

1.1 Event Format

The Bracket House Leagues tournament will be played as a 5v5 adult flag football tournament.

1.2 Age Requirement

All players must be 18 years old or older. No exceptions.

1.3 Player Registration

All players must be officially registered before participating. Players may not play unless they are listed on a team roster and have completed the required waiver.

1.4 Team Captain Responsibility

Each team captain is responsible for:

- Submitting team registration
- Communicating tournament information to players
- Making sure all players are registered
- Making sure all players have signed the waiver
- Making sure the team understands and follows the rules

2. Field Dimensions and Equipment

2.1 Field Size

The field will be approximately:

- 54 yards long total
- 40-yard playing field
- 7-yard end zones
- 25 yards wide

2.2 Line to Gain

Teams will have 3 downs to reach midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, they will receive 3 downs to score.

2.3 Equipment

Bracket House Leagues will provide:

- Official game balls
- Flags

- Field markers/cones

Teams will play with the official game balls provided only. Teams may not use their own footballs during official tournament games.

2.4 Uniforms / Shirts

Teams must wear matching or similar-colored shirts. Teams should also bring a white shirt as a backup in case both teams have similar colors. No pockets are allowed on shorts.

3. Game Timing

3.1 Game Length

Games will consist of:

- Two 15-minute halves
- 3-minute halftime break

3.2 Clock Rules

The clock will generally run continuously except for:

- Team timeouts
- Referee stoppages
- Final minute of the 2nd half

3.3 Final Minute Stop-Clock Rules

During the final minute of the game, stop-clock rules will be in effect.

The clock stops for:

- Incomplete passes
- First downs
- Plays ending out of bounds
- Timeouts
- Referee stoppages

3.4 Timeouts

Each team receives 2 timeouts per half. Timeouts do not carry over from one half to the next.

4. Downs and Possession

4.1 Starting Possession

Starting possession will be determined before the game by coin toss, captain choice, or tournament procedure.

4.2 Downs

Teams receive:

- 3 downs to reach midfield
- 3 downs to score after crossing midfield

4.3 Turnover on Downs

If a team fails to reach the line to gain or fails to score, possession changes.

After a turnover on downs, the opposing team starts at its own 5-yard line.

4.4 Turnovers

Turnovers include:

- Interceptions
- Fumbles caught in the air

Interceptions are live and may be returned.

Fumbles that hit the ground are dead at the spot.

5. Scoring

5.1 Touchdowns

A touchdown is worth 6 points.

5.2 Extra Points

After a touchdown, teams may attempt:

- 1 point from the 5-yard line
- 2 points from the 10-yard line

Extra point attempts may be intercepted and returned by the defense for 2 points.

5.3 Safety

A safety is worth 2 points.

After a safety, the ball goes to the opposing team at the 5-yard line.

6. Quarterback Rules

6.1 No QB Scrambles

The quarterback may not run the ball past the line of scrimmage on designed runs or scrambles.

6.2 No Blitzing / No QB Rush

Defenses may not blitz or rush the quarterback. Once the ball is released, the defense can rush past the line of scrimmage.

6.3 6 second count Throw Clock

Quarterback has to the count of 6 to throw the ball. Referee counts aloud and this does NOT represent a true 6 seconds. It is approximately 4-5 true seconds.

6.4 Sack / Dead Ball

If the quarterback does not release the ball before the 6-second count expires, the referee will blow the play dead or call “sack.”

Result:

- Play is dead
- Offense loses 5 yards
- Loss of down

6.5 Illegal Defensive Rush

If a defender crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is thrown or handed off, it is an illegal rush.

The play will continue. After the play, the offense may choose to:

- Accept the penalty
- Take the result of the play

Penalty result:

- 5-yard penalty
- Replay of down

7. Running, Handoffs, and Laterals

7.1 Handoffs

Handoffs are allowed.

7.2 Laterals

Laterals are allowed.

7.3 Quarterback Runs

Quarterback run plays are not allowed.

An easy way to think about the rule is that two offensive players must possess the ball in order for a run play to be legal.

Example:

- A toss from the quarterback to a running back allows the running back to either throw the ball forward or advance the ball with a run.

7.4 Ball Carrier Spot

The ball will be spotted where the ball is when the ball carrier's flag is pulled.

8. Passing Rules

8.1 Forward Passes

Only one forward pass is allowed per play.

If a team intends to run a double pass, the first pass must be:

- Backward
- Behind the line of scrimmage

The second pass may then be thrown forward as long as it is thrown from behind the line of scrimmage.

8.2 Interceptions and Laterals

Interceptions are live and may be returned.

Laterals caught in the air by the defense may also be returned.

9. Flag Pulling and Ball Carrier Rules

9.1 Flag Pulls

A player is down as soon as one of their flags is removed from the hip.

The ball is spotted where the ball was at the time of the flag pull.

9.2 Missing Flags

If a player does not have flags, that player becomes one-hand touch.

9.3 Flag Guarding / Ball Carrier Contact

Ball carriers may not:

- Stiff arm
- Lower the shoulder
- Initiate forcible contact into a defender
- Attempt to barrel through a defender

Dipping is allowed.

Jumping is allowed, but not if it creates forcible contact into a defender.

It is the ball carrier's responsibility to avoid the defender. A ball carrier should change direction rather than attempting to run through a defender.

9.4 Diving

Players may not dive while in possession of the ball.

Diving for catches, flag pulls, or defensive plays is allowed as long as it does not create dangerous contact.

10. Blocking and Contact

10.1 Blocking / Screening

No blocking, screening, or intentional contact to impede a defender is allowed.

Players without the ball should avoid contact with defenders.

Players without the ball do have the right to remain still, but they may not move into a defender's path to create a block or screen.

10.2 Contact

Players must avoid unnecessary or dangerous contact.

Referees may penalize players for:

- Charging
- Holding
- Pushing
- Illegal contact
- Dangerous play
- Reckless play
- Spin moves that recklessly run into defenders

Defenders can press within 5 yards. Defenders are not allowed to press the center.

11. Penalties

11.1 Defensive Offside / Illegal Rush

If a defender illegally crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is thrown or handed off, the play continues.

After the play, the offense may choose to:

- Accept the penalty
- Take the result of the play

Penalty result:

- **5-yard penalty**
- Replay of down

11.2 Delay of Game

The offense has a 40-second play clock.

Delay of game is a **5-yard penalty**.

11.3 Pass Interference

Defensive pass interference is a **spot foul** and an automatic first down.

Offensive pass interference is a **10-yard penalty** and the down is replayed.

11.4 Holding (on the tackle)

Players may not hold during routes or during flag pulling.

If a player in possession of the ball is held:

- **10-yard penalty**
- Automatic first down

If the referee determines the hold prevented a touchdown, a touchdown may be awarded.

11.5 Unsportsmanlike Conduct

Unsportsmanlike conduct is a **15-yard** penalty.

Unsportsmanlike conduct may also result in:

- Warning
- Ejection
- Tournament removal depending on severity

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Excessive arguing
- Taunting
- Threatening language
- Fighting
- Dangerous conduct
- Refusal to follow referee or tournament staff instructions

11.5 Charging

Ball carrier runs into a defender with force. This includes lowering a shoulder, jumping into a defender, trucking, spinning into a defender, etc. **10 yard** penalty from the spot and the down counts.

11.6 Illegal contact

Contact to the face or head area **5 yards** and an automatic first down.

11.7 flag guarding

5-yard penalty from the spot of the foul. The down counts.

11.8 Holding (in coverage)

5-yard penalty and an automatic first down

11.9 False start

Blow the play dead. **5 yard** penalty on the offense. Replay down.

11.10 Illegal motion/formation

All players must get set before the snap. You may have one player in motion after he has been set. Let the play run, then it's a **5-yard** penalty from the previous spot. Replay down.

12. Overtime Rules

12.1 Group Play

There is no overtime in group/regular season play.

Games that are tied at the end of regulation during group play will end in a tie.

12.2 Playoff Overtime Format

If a playoff game is tied at the end of regulation, overtime will use alternating possessions.

12.3 Starting Spot

Each team will receive alternating one-play possessions from the 10-yard line.

12.4 One-Play Possessions

Each overtime possession is one play.

12.5 No Extra Points in Overtime

There are no extra point attempts in overtime.

12.6 Continuing Overtime

Teams alternate possessions until there is a winner.

13. Sportsmanship and Conduct

13.1 Sportsmanship Emphasis

This tournament/League will place a major emphasis on sportsmanship, organization, and respect.

Players, captains, spectators, and teams are expected to conduct themselves appropriately.

13.2 Trash Talk

Excessive trash talk, taunting, threatening language, and excessive arguing will not be tolerated.

13.3 Arguing With Officials

Captains may communicate respectfully with referees.

Players should not surround, yell at, or aggressively argue with officials.

13.4 Fighting

If a player is involved in a fight of any kind, they may be removed from the tournament.

Bracket House Leagues reserves the right to remove any player or team for fighting, threatening behavior, or serious misconduct.

13.5 Ejections

A player may be ejected for:

- Fighting
- Threatening behavior
- Dangerous contact
- Repeated unsportsmanlike conduct
- Refusal to follow tournament rules
- Excessive arguing with officials or tournament staff

13.6 Tournament Staff Authority

Bracket House Leagues has final authority on:

- Player removals
- Team discipline
- Forfeits
- Safety decisions
- Rule interpretations not clearly covered in the rulebook

14. Rosters and Team Rules

14.1 Team Size

Recommended roster size: 6-8 players.

14.2 Minimum Players to Start

A team may start with 4 players.

14.3 Age Requirement

All players must be 18+. No exceptions.

14.4 Roster Lock

Rosters are locked at registration.

Players who show up on game day must:

- Be on the official roster
- Have signed the waiver

Players may not be added on game day unless approved by Bracket House Leagues.

15. Forfeits

15.1 Late Teams

There is no grace period for late teams.

Players must be ready to play at their scheduled game time.

15.2 Forfeit Result

Forfeits are recorded as 21-0.

16. Tournament Playoff Seeding and Tiebreakers

16.1 Group Stage

Teams will play group-stage games before playoffs.

16.2 Playoffs

After group play, teams will advance to playoffs based on standings.

16.3 Two-Team Tiebreaker

If two teams are tied, the tiebreaker order is:

- Head-to-head results
- Point differential
- Points allowed
- Overtime period

16.4 Three-Team Tiebreaker

If three teams are tied, the tiebreaker order is:

- Head-to-head result
- Point differential
- Points allowed
- Coin flip

17. Weather and Safety

17.1 Weather Delays

Bracket House Leagues may delay, shorten, reschedule, or cancel games due to unsafe weather or field conditions.

17.2 Lightning

Lightning rules follow park policy.

17.3 Injuries / Heat Safety

Injuries and health concerns include, but are not limited to:

- Heat exhaustion
- Throwing up
- Dizziness
- Cramping
- Visible distress
- Injury from contact or play

Players may be taken out of the game at referee discretion.

If a referee believes a player is unsafe to continue, the player must leave the game and may not return until cleared by tournament staff.

18. Referee Authority, Mercy Rule, Misc.

18.1 Referee Judgment

Referee calls are final during play.

18.2 Rule Clarifications

Only captains may respectfully ask for rule clarification.

18.3 Final Authority

Bracket House Leagues has final authority on tournament-wide decisions, disputes, and discipline.

18.4 Mercy Rule

If a team leads by 17+ points with 1 minute remaining in the game, the game is over.

19. Ball spot

19.1 Only one foot is required in bounds to make a catch

19.2 The ball is spotted where the ball was when the runner’s flag was pulled.

19.3 The ball must be snapped at least 5 yards from the sideline. (Refs judgement)