Pocatello Flag Football Rulebook

6v6 League Rules

Version 1.0 • November 3, 2026

This rulebook explains Pocatello Flag Football league play for players, captains and officials. League-specific rules in this document control. This is an independent league rulebook, not an official NFL publication. Field dimensions and the final field diagram will be announced separately.

How to use this book: Find a topic in the contents, then use its numbered rules for the full explanation. The quick reference and penalty table summarize key decisions. Examples explain common situations.

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1 Quick reference

Topic	League rule	Details
Players	Six required on the field; maximum ten on roster	§3
Game	Four 10-minute quarters	§4
Warm-up / breaks	Five-minute warm-up; three-minute halftime; one-minute breaks after Q1 and Q3	§4
Clocks	25-second play clock; five-second passing clock	§§4, 7
Timeouts	Two 30-second timeouts per team per half; no carryover	§4
Stop-clock finish	Final four minutes of Q4	§4
Downs	Four to midfield; three to score	§5
Points	TD 6; conversion 1 from five yards or 2 from ten; safety 2	§5
Rush	Maximum two, seven yards back; undeclared and delayed rushes allowed	§7
QB scramble	Only after a legal defender crosses the LOS; no QB runs on no-run-zone snaps	§7
Indoor rebounds	Walls are dead; other fixture rebounds stay live	§8.8
Lateral	One backward lateral beyond the LOS per play	§8
Dive/reach	Must start inside the physical no-run zone	§9
Offensive penalties	Yardage and replay, except illegal passes/laterals: loss of down	§10
Holding / tackle	Holding: five yards at play's end; tackling: 15-yard personal foul	§10
Ties	Regular season: tie; playoffs and championship: equal-attempt shootout	§11

2 Definitions and field markings

2.1 Line of scrimmage (LOS)
The imaginary line across the field through the ball's pre-snap spot.

2.2 Line to gain
Midfield when the offense is seeking its first down; the opponent's goal line when seeking a touchdown.

2.3 No-run zone
The marked five-yard area immediately before midfield or the opponent's goal line in the offense's direction of travel. Field dimensions and final markings will be announced separately (§12).

2.4 Two different uses of the zone
The snap location determines whether a rushing play is prohibited. The runner's location when a dive/reach begins determines whether that action is permitted. A play may start outside the zone and later enter it.

2.5 Rush line
Seven yards beyond the LOS on the defense's side. Eligible initial rushers must begin at least this far back.

2.6 Backward lateral
A toss traveling backward from its release point. Sideways and forward lateral attempts are illegal. One backward lateral is allowed beyond the LOS per offensive play.

2.7 Ready for play
The official's signal that the ball is spotted and the offense may snap it.

2.8 Dead ball
Play has ended; no subsequent action advances the ball.

2.9 Free play
Officials allow a flagged play to finish so the offense may choose the play's result or the applicable penalty. This does not erase other fouls.

3 Teams equipment and conduct

3.1 Six required
Six eligible players are required to start and continue. The roster maximum is ten, including the captain. An eligible rostered substitute may replace an injured or ejected player. If the team cannot field six under the applicable roster and emergency-substitute rules, it forfeits.

3.2 Equipment
Regulation adult-size footballs are used. Mouthguards are strongly recommended, not mandatory. No metal cleats; footwear must meet venue requirements. Jerseys must be tucked in and flags visible at both hips.

3.3 Pockets and jewelry
Both are permitted. Clothing must not cover flags or interfere with flag pulling.

3.4 League-provided flags only
Altering, tying or otherwise securing flags to prevent removal is prohibited.

3.5 Conduct
Flagrant contact, fighting or threatening an official results in immediate ejection. The league determines further suspension. Ordinary personal fouls carry 15 yards.

3.6 Eligibility and check-in
Players must be at least 18 by their first game. Every player must be rostered and have a completed waiver before playing. Players may belong to only one team per season except for approved emergency substitutions.

3.7 Roster lock and playoffs

Roster changes are allowed before the team's third regular-season game; the roster then locks. Playoff players must be on the locked roster and have played at least two regular-season games for that team.

3.8 Emergency substitutes

During the regular season only, a team short of six may borrow eligible players from another league team solely to reach six. The upcoming opponent's captain must agree before kickoff. Each borrowed player must have a signed waiver, required league fees paid, no active suspension, and must check in with the official. Borrowing cannot create a bench. If a rostered player arrives and can play, a borrowed player leaves the lineup. Borrowing does not alter either roster or count toward the substitute's playoff eligibility. Playoffs require the team's own eligible roster.

3.9 Forfeits

Six eligible players must be ready when the five-minute warm-up ends; there is no additional grace period. An approved emergency substitute may fill a vacancy. Record a forfeit as 6–0, unless the non-forfeiting team is already ahead when the game is forfeited, in which case keep the actual score. If neither team can field six, both receive a loss.

4 Game timing

4.1 Schedule

Games use four 10-minute quarters, a five-minute warm-up, a three-minute halftime and one-minute breaks between Q1–Q2 and Q3–Q4. Scheduled blocks are one hour; there is no booking-time hard cutoff.

4.2 Running clock with a stop-clock finish

The game clock runs except for team timeouts, injuries, officials' stoppages and possession changes. Additional stoppages apply during the final four minutes of Q4.

Event	Before final four minutes	Final four minutes of Q4
Incomplete pass	Running clock	Stop; restart on next snap
Runner out of bounds	Running clock	Stop; restart on next snap
First down in bounds	Continues	Continues
Sack in bounds	Continues	Continues
Possession change	Stop; restart on ready-for-play signal	Stop; restart on next snap
Team timeout / injury / official stoppage	Stop	Stop
Touchdown and conversion	Running-clock procedure; possession change stops clock	Stop; conversion untimed; restart on next possession's snap
Penalty enforcement	Official administers	Stop; restart depends on preceding play

4.3 Brief possession changes
Officials promptly spot the ball and signal ready for play. That signal starts the 25-second play clock. The game-clock restart follows the table.

4.4 Timeouts
Each team receives two 30-second timeouts per half. Unused timeouts do not carry over. Timeouts stop the game clock during all quarters.

4.5 Play clock
The offense has 25 seconds to snap after ready for play. Expiration is delay of game: five yards and the same down.

4.6 Expiration ends the play, not the drive
A ball snapped before zero remains live until dead. No new play starts after regulation expires, except a required penalty extension or a touchdown conversion that could affect the outcome. The offense does not finish the entire drive after zero. See §10.8 for penalty extensions.

4.7 Scheduling note
The base schedule totals 50 minutes before stoppages. The remaining ten minutes are a scheduling allowance, not a limit on game-clock stoppages.

4.8 Clock restart after interruptions
After a team timeout, restart on the snap. After an injury, restart on ready for play if the clock would otherwise run, or on the snap if the preceding play required it. During the final four minutes, after penalty enforcement restart on the snap if the preceding play stopped the clock; otherwise restart on ready for play.

4.9 Four-minute transition
Officials announce entry into the final four minutes. There is no automatic timeout; a live play continues.

4.10 Clock manipulation
Officials may correct the clock and control its restart so a team cannot gain time or run it off through an intentional foul.

5 Possession downs and scoring

5.1 Downs
Four downs to reach midfield, then three downs to score.

5.2 Fourth-down choice
Before fourth down, the offense may declare a punt or elect to play. A declared punt involves no kick; the opponent starts at its own five-yard line. A failed fourth-down attempt gives the opponent possession where the play ends, subject to penalties.

5.3 After midfield
Failure to score on third down gives the opponent possession at its own five-yard line.

Score	Value	Conditions
Touchdown	6	Apply normal spotting and the dive/reach exception
Conversion from five-yard line	1	Passing only
Conversion from ten-yard line	2	Normal league QB and rushing rules
Safety	2	Scoring team receives possession at its own five-yard line
Defensive conversion return	2	Return to opposite end zone during regulation

5.4 Regular-season ties stand
Playoff and championship ties use §11.

5.5 Opening possessions
The coin-toss winner chooses to start on offense or defer that choice to the second half. Each team receives one half's opening possession. Opening possessions and possessions after touchdowns start at the offense's own five-yard line. There are no kickoffs.

5.6 Changing ends
Teams switch ends after each quarter. Possession and down carry over after Q1 and Q3; halftime begins a new possession under §5.5.

5.7 Safeties
Award two points when a ball carrier becomes down in their own end zone, including a flag pull, stepping out or a five-second sack. A dropped snap or backward pass that becomes dead in the offense's own end zone is a safety. An incomplete forward pass is not a safety merely because it lands there. After a safety, the scoring team starts at its own five-yard line.

5.8 Interception touchback
A defender intercepting in their own end zone may return the ball or stay there for a touchback at their own five-yard line. Leaving the end zone and voluntarily returning before becoming down there results in a safety.

6 Snap formations and substitutions

6.1 Center eligibility
The snapper may release and catch a pass.

6.2 Motion
One offensive player may be moving laterally or backward at the snap, not toward the opponent's goal line.

6.3 Snap
The ball must be snapped backward to another player. A dropped snap is dead where it touches the ground.

6.4 Substitutions
Substitute between plays. Replaced players must leave before the snap. Six eligible players must remain on the field.

6.5 Illegal motion
More than one offensive player moving at the snap, or motion toward the opponent's goal line: five yards from the previous LOS and replay the down.

6.6 Illegal snap
A snap not made backward to another player is dead immediately: five yards back and same down. A dropped but otherwise legal snap instead follows §6.3; the played down counts.

6.7 Too many players
More than six on the field at the snap: five yards from the previous LOS and replay. The non-offending team may decline and keep the result.

6.8 Illegal participation
Stop participation by an unrostered or otherwise ineligible player, remove the player, and assess five yards with the down replayed. Apply the forfeit rule if six eligible players cannot be fielded.

7 Passing quarterback runs and rushing

7.1 Five-second passing clock
The passer must release the pass before the five-second count expires unless an event in 7.2 ends the count. If still holding the ball at expiration, the play is immediately dead as a sack. The down counts and the spot is the passer's flag-belt position, including lost yardage. This is not a replay-down penalty.

7.2 Ending the count
The passing clock ends when a defender legally crosses the LOS, or when the offense makes a handoff or backward pass.

7.3 Quarterback scramble
Outside no-run-zone snaps, the QB may run across the LOS once a defender legally crosses it. Approaching or faking a rush does not unlock a QB run.

7.4 No-run-zone snaps
A forward pass across the LOS is required. A rush ends the passing count but does not allow the QB to run across the LOS.

7.5 Initial rushers
Maximum two, each starting at least seven yards back. They do not declare themselves. Delayed rushing is allowed.

7.6 After a handoff or backward pass
All defenders may cross the LOS regardless of their starting distance; the two-rusher limit no longer applies.

7.7 Early-rush free play

A defender crosses inside the seven-yard rush line before the snap, fails to reset legally before the snap, and then rushes the passer. Flag the infraction and let the play continue. The offense may accept five yards from the previous LOS and replay the down, or decline and keep the result. It may accept even after gaining yardage. An unfavorable result, including an interception, is erased by acceptance, subject to additional fouls.

EXAMPLE: The rusher leaves early and the offense completes a long pass. The offense may decline. If the pass is intercepted, it may accept five yards and replay the down.

7.8 Forward passing

One forward pass is allowed per play, released from behind the LOS and caught beyond it. After the ball crosses the LOS, no forward pass is allowed, even if the ball returns behind it. All six offensive players are eligible receivers, including the center and QB. An illegal forward pass carries five yards from release and loss of down.

7.9 Throwaways and intentional grounding

A passer may throw the ball away provided it crosses the LOS. Deliberately throwing it into the ground behind the LOS to avoid a sack is intentional grounding: five yards from release and loss of down. An otherwise legal throwaway need not be caught.

8 Laterals catches and dead balls

8.1 One lateral beyond the LOS

The offense may attempt one backward lateral beyond the LOS per play. Release must occur before the flag pull. The receiver may advance but cannot lateral again beyond the LOS. A defender may intercept the airborne lateral and return it. Unlimited handoffs and backward passes are allowed behind the LOS. A second lateral beyond the LOS, or any sideways/forward lateral attempt, carries five yards from release and loss of down. The played down counts and is not replayed.

8.2 Completed catch

Control of the ball and at least one foot in bounds are required.

8.3 Grounded ball

A dropped ball or lateral is dead on contact with the ground; there is no recovery or advancement. A forward fumble cannot gain yardage; return it to the point possession was lost.

8.4 Runner down

A flag pull, going out of bounds, or any body part other than a hand or foot touching the ground ends the runner’s advance. A legal dive/reach must achieve the required line before a dead-ball event.

8.5 Missing flag

Gaining possession while missing a flag makes the player immediately down at that spot. A flag falling off while carrying the ball makes the runner down where it falls.

8.6 Intentional early flag pull

A defender intentionally removing a receiver’s flag before possession commits a five-yard foul from the previous LOS with replay of the down. The receiver may catch and advance; pulling their remaining flag ends the play. If both flags were intentionally removed, a defender’s one-hand touch ends the play after

the catch. The offense may keep the result or accept the penalty. Officials judge intent. If either player accidentally removes the flag before possession, there is no early-pull foul: the receiver is down at the catch spot under §8.5.

8.7 Interceptions
Returnable in regulation, including a defensive conversion return worth two points. Shootout interceptions end the attempt immediately.

8.8 Indoor rebounds
A ball touching a wall is immediately dead and out of bounds; it cannot rebound into play. Contact with the ceiling, overhead netting or other non-wall fixtures does not itself end the play. The ball may still be caught or intercepted. Ground contact and normal dead-ball rules still apply.

8.9 Ball lodged in a fixture
If the ball becomes stuck in netting or a fixture, whistle it dead and replay the down. A rebound remains live under §8.8.

8.10 Inadvertent whistle
If a player possesses the ball, that team chooses the spot at the whistle or a replay. If the ball is loose or airborne, replay the down.

8.11 Interception-return lateral
One backward lateral is permitted per return. A second, sideways or forward lateral carries five yards from release and ends the return at that point. The intercepting team keeps possession and starts first down after enforcement; no down is removed from its upcoming possession.

9 Spotting diving and contact

9.1 Normal spot
Use the runner’s flag-belt position when the flag is pulled, not the extended ball or the defender’s hand after the pull.

9.2 Dive/reach only from inside the zone
A dive or reach to achieve a first down or touchdown must begin inside the physical no-run zone. The ball must clearly reach the required line under control before the flag pull, out-of-bounds or other dead-ball event.

9.3 Outside-zone initiation
Immediately dead at the point the dive/reach begins. The down counts; no extra yardage penalty.

9.4 Unsuccessful extension
If the legal extension does not clearly achieve the first down or touchdown, it earns no extra yardage; normal spotting applies.

EXAMPLE: A receiver catches outside the zone, runs into it, and then dives. The dive may qualify. Launching outside the zone and landing inside does not qualify.

9.5 Stationary obstacle
An offensive player may stand between a defender and runner only with feet planted and without initiating contact. Moving to obstruct is an illegal screen. Physical blocking, pushing and holding are prohibited.

9.6 Charging
Intentionally running through a defender, lowering a shoulder into them, shoving or stiff-arming is prohibited. Diving does not excuse charging or flag guarding.

9.7 Defensive impeding
Grabbing a belt, shirt or pants during a flag-pull attempt and restricting the runner is holding/impeding: five yards at the end of the play. Incidental contact that does not restrict the runner is not a foul.

9.8 Tackling
Taking the runner to the ground is a 15-yard personal foul, including when a flag-pull attempt becomes a tackle.

9.9 Flag guarding
Using a hand, arm, ball or clothing to prevent a flag pull is illegal. Normal running motion alone is not flag guarding.

9.10 Spinning and jumping
Spinning is allowed without charging, initiating contact or flag guarding. Jumping to catch or intercept is allowed. Hurdling another player is prohibited. The dive/reach exception in §9.2 remains unchanged.

10 Penalty reference
LEAGUE RULE — Offensive yardage penalties replay the down. Illegal forward passes, illegal lateral attempts and intentional grounding are exceptions: the down counts and is not replayed. Do not confuse penalties with sacks or dead-ball rulings, where the played down counts.

Infraction	Yardage / enforcement	Down
Second beyond-LOS lateral, sideways/forward lateral or illegal forward pass	5 from release spot	Loss of down
Intentional grounding	5 from release spot	Loss of down
Moving screen / physical blocking	5 from foul spot	Replay
Flag guarding	5 from foul spot	Replay
Charging	10 from foul spot; flagrant conduct may also trigger ejection	Replay
Offensive pass interference	5 from previous LOS	Replay
Defensive pass interference	10 from previous LOS	Replay
Early flag pull	5 from previous LOS	Replay; offense may decline

Infraction	Yardage / enforcement	Down
Illegal rush: too close / third initial rusher	5 from previous LOS	Replay
Early-rush free play	5 from previous LOS; offense may decline	Replay if accepted
Defensive offside	5 from previous LOS; offense may keep play result	Replay if accepted
False start	Immediate whistle; 5 back	Same down
Delay of game	5 back	Same down
Defensive holding / impeding	5 added at end of play	Counts; first down if midfield reached
Defender tackles runner	15 at end of play	Automatic first down
Flagrant charging	15; ejection; do not also add ordinary charging yardage	Offensive penalty: replay
Ordinary personal foul	15; administer for the foul and timing involved	See administration rules
Illegal motion	5 from previous LOS	Replay
Illegal snap	Immediate dead ball; 5 back	Same down
Too many players	5 from previous LOS; non-offending team may decline	Replay if accepted
Illegal participation	Remove ineligible player; 5	Replay
Dive/reach begun outside zone	Dead at initiation; no extra penalty	Counts
Five-second passing expiration	Sack at passer's flag-belt position	Counts

10.1 Pass interference

Contact must materially prevent a catch (defense) or create a receiving advantage by contacting/pushing off a defender (offense). Incidental contact or fair play on the ball is not a foul.

10.2 Goal-line enforcement

When defensive penalty yardage would reach or cross the goal line, enforce half the distance. Penalty yardage alone does not award a touchdown.

10.3 Ejections

Flagrant contact, fighting or threatening an official results in immediate ejection and possible further league suspension.

10.4 Tackling enforcement

Add 15 yards at the end of the play and award an automatic first down. Use half the distance near the goal line. Flagrant tackles also result in ejection.

10.5 Charging severity

Ordinary charging remains ten yards from the foul spot and replay. Flagrant charging is a 15-yard personal foul with ejection. Enforce one yardage penalty, not both.

10.6 Multiple fouls

When both teams commit live-ball fouls without a possession change, offset and replay. Misconduct may still result in ejection. If one team commits multiple live-ball fouls, the opponent chooses one penalty; do not stack yardages.

10.7 Dead-ball and goal-line administration

Enforce fouls after a play separately before the next snap; do not replay the completed down. For offensive penalties, use half the distance when full yardage would reach or cross the offense's goal line.

10.8 Untimed extension

An accepted defensive live-ball penalty on a play where time expires allows one untimed down. An offensive foul alone does not extend the period.

10.9 Fouls involving an interception

If the intercepting team fouls before gaining possession, the original offense may accept and retain possession with down treatment under that penalty. If the intercepting team fouls after gaining possession, the interception stands; enforce its return-team foul from the foul spot and start its offense first down. If the original offense fouls against the returner, the interception stands; add holding or tackling yardage to the return's end.

10.10 Both teams foul around an interception

If the intercepting team was foul-free before the interception, it may keep possession by declining the opponent's foul and accepting its own enforcement. Otherwise, offset and replay.

EXAMPLE: A defender intercepts, then a teammate illegally screens. The interception stands, but the return team loses five yards from the screen's spot.

11 Playoff tiebreaker

11.1 Equal-attempt two-point shootout

Used only in playoffs and championship games.

1. Coin toss determines which team chooses to go first or second.
2. Each team gets one play from the opponent's ten-yard line, worth two points.
3. Normal gameplay rules apply, including the five-second passing count.
4. If one converts and the other fails, the converting team wins.
5. If both convert or both fail, repeat; alternate first possession each round.
6. Both teams always receive an attempt in each round.

7. Interceptions immediately end the attempt; no returns.

8. Apply league penalties, including replaying an attempt where required.

9. No game clock; the 25-second play clock remains.

10. Each team has one 30-second timeout for the entire shootout.

12 Administration and field notice

12.1 Rule disputes

Only captains may request clarification. Officials decide judgment calls. The league handles eligibility disputes and further discipline.

12.2 Field notice

Field dimensions and a final diagram will be announced separately. Officials will identify the boundaries, midfield, end zones, no-run zones and rush markings before play.

12.3 Version

Version 1.0, November 3, 2026. This edition includes the league’s approved gameplay, eligibility and enforcement decisions. Updates will be identified by version and date.