



Upward Flag Football

REFEREE HANDBOOK

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Welcome to Upward Flag Football

This handbook is designed to provide you with what you need to be a successful Upward Flag Football Referee. The information on the following pages is designed to guide you through the season and includes the rule enhancements for Upward Flag Football.

Along with this handbook, you can find resources on ***MyUpward.org***. Contact your League Director for details on how to access these resources.

It is also important for officials to understand the goals of the sports ministry, what success looks like and how success is measured. These points can be discovered at the pre-season referee meeting prior to the season or by consulting with the league director.

The goal of our sports ministry is:

Success looks like:

Success is measured by:





**“Love the lord your God with
all your heart and with all your
soul. Love him with all your mind
and with all your strength.”**

Mark 12:30 (Nirv)

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Refereeing Upward Flag Football

Chapter Overview:

- 6 Becoming an Upward Flag Football Referee
- 8. Communicating with Coaches and Players
- 9. Controlling the Game



Becoming an Upward Flag Football Referee

Upward Flag Football is designed to promote healthy competition and sportsmanship while also teaching the objectives of game play. Coaches will teach the basic fundamentals of football through drills, plays and scrimmages along with sharing life lessons through mid-practice huddles. While teaching the game, a coaches top priority is to promote the discovery of Jesus through sports. You can help support the coach in how you officiate the game. As an Upward Flag Football Referee, you set the tone of the game day experience by bringing a positive influence to the game.

It is important that you understand your responsibilities as a referee:

› **Understand and Know The Sport**

- Begin by knowing and understanding the sport, rules of football and the unique rules for each level of play. Knowing these things will help you to be confident as you blow the whistle and make calls. Use the whistle, use hand signals and explain the violations as they occur.

› **Lead By Example**

- It is important that referees are role models on the field. You should demonstrate a Christ-like attitude through your officiating and through the encouragement of players. Provide positive comments to players during the game for their play, effort and sportsmanship.



› **Control The Game**

- Upward Flag Football referees represent the highest level of authority on the field. Through this authority, it is important to make the necessary calls throughout the game. Coaches spend time at practice teaching the rules and penalties to their players. On game day, it is your job to support that by enforcing the rules and holding players accountable.
- Coaches, spectators and players appreciate a well played game and consistent enforcement of the rules. Call the game consistently for everyone to help them learn the game.

› **Communicate Effectively with Coaches, Players and Spectators**

- You will serve as on-the-field coach, teaching the game as it happens. Simple communication can provide a lot of direction. Things like, “Move up 88, there you go, you’re on the line-of-scrimmage now.” “Watch your hands 22; keep them away from your flags while you carry the ball.”
- Hand signals should accompany all penalties that are called. Coaches and spectators need to know the result of the penalty.
- Talk with coaches during game play and at possession changes. Communicate what you are seeing; build rapport and confidence with the coaches.
- Before the game begins, it is important to communicate with your referee partner. Talk about positioning, and review the responsibilities for each of you. Basic communication before the game begins will make a positive difference during the game.



› **Employ Proper Positioning and Refereeing Mechanics**

- This includes coordinating efforts with your referee partner, blowing the whistle, using hand signals and keeping the game on track.

Communicating With Coaches and Players

Communicating with Coaches

As teams are warming up, take time to introduce yourself to the coaches. Ask if there's anything in particular that you need to know about. A heads-up on trick plays or certain strategies may help you make the right calls during game play.

During the game, coaches want to know which penalties are being called. Referees should communicate clearly with the coaches and give proper hand signals to avoid confusion.

Going into halftime is a good opportunity to set the tone for the second half. This may be a time where a coach has a question about particular rules or violations from the first half.

Communicating with Players

The referee sets the tone for the game by gathering both teams and their coaches at midfield for a brief word of encouragement and prayer. This also serves as a time to remind players what potential penalties to be aware of throughout the game. Through words of encouragement and warning, referees are often able to prevent a penalty from occurring.



Here are a few things to cover during this pregame meeting:

- › Be sure all players have their flags on their hips and their jerseys tucked in.
- › Be sure to encourage players.

Have players remove all hats, jewelry and watches.

- › Give reminders for game play (three offensive players on the line of scrimmage before the snap; unless in motion, all offensive players must be set on the snap of the ball, etc.)
- › Remind players and coaches the reasons to play Upward Flag Football: to have fun and to honor God with their actions and attitudes.

Be sure to encourage players. This will go a long way toward building players' self-esteem. Since referees are out on the field with the players, they have the perfect opportunity to encourage them.

Controlling the Game

The referee must keep the game under control, while promoting a competitive experience. The best way to do this is to blow the whistle to end play and to call penalties when they occur. Any time a play ends, both referees should blow their whistles and spot the ball. Any rough play should be penalized first and warned second. If rough play is not stopped quickly, it will escalate and undermine the purpose of this league. Keeping the game under control will create a safe environment for which both coaches and parents will be grateful.

Clock Management

Managing the clock is an important function for the referees. You'll monitor two clocks throughout the game: the game clock and the play clock.

Game-Clock Management

The game clock is managed by Referee #2. Upward Flag Football has four 9-minute quarters. The game clock stops in the following instances with less than one minute before halftime or one minute before the end of the game:

- › After an incomplete pass
- › After the ball carrier goes out of bounds
- › After a touchdown
- › During an extra-point attempt
- › During an official's timeout
- › After an interception
- › During a called timeout, until the ball is snapped to resume play
- › A dead ball penalty or at the end of a play where a penalty has occurred
- › On a change of possession

Note: A half or game cannot end on a defensive penalty. After the penalty is applied, the offense will be awarded one untimed down.

Each team will have one 30-second timeout per half. Unused timeouts do not carry over to the next half.

Play-Clock Management

The play clock is managed by Referee #2. An offensive team has 30 seconds to snap the ball after the referee has spotted the ball to declare it ready for play. The offensive team should be warned when only 10 seconds remain on the play clock. If the ball is not snapped by the expiration of the play clock, the whistle should be blown and a delay of game penalty administered.

To allow both teams a maximum number of plays per game enforce the 30 second play clock.



Penalties

Referees will call all penalties. It is very important to understand which penalties stop a play and which penalties don't. In most cases, a penalty flag should be thrown in the direction of the play and the play continues. The penalty will be addressed at the end of the play. For the following situations, the penalty stops the play and the penalty can be addressed right away:

- › Delay of game
- › Encroachment
- › False start
- › Neutral Zone Infraction

If a penalty happens near the end zone, where the penalty yardage would place the ball in the end zone, then the penalty will be half the distance to the goal.

For a complete list of penalties, see pages 32-37.

Managing Substitutions

Substitutions take place on two occasions: at the beginning of each quarter and each time the ball changes possession.

- › At the beginning of each quarter, coaches will communicate to players the offensive and defensive groups for that quarter. This should take no more than 30 seconds.
- › After each possession change, the player group on the field will change. This should take only a few seconds, as all it requires is some players being replaced on the field (players running off and on the field).

It's important to keep these substitutions moving as quickly as possible. Remind coaches that this is not a timeout.



“So let us do all we can to live in peace. And let us work hard to build up one another.”

Romans 14:19 (Nirv)



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Rules To Upward Flag Football

Chapter Overview:

- 14 Field Diagram and Format
- 20 Offensive Basics
- 24 Defensive Basics



The rules of Upward Flag Football are designed to promote healthy competition and sportsmanship while also teaching the objectives of game play.

Field Diagram and Format

- › The offensive team is awarded a first down when it crosses the midfield line. Based on the field size, one first down is sufficient to advance the football for a score.
- › The lines 5 yards from each end zone and on both sides of the midfield line are no-run zones. No-run zones do not apply to the K5 division. The no run zones are designed to take away power-running plays.
- › If an offensive team picks up a first down by crossing midfield but is then pushed back into the no-run zone, the no-run zone will not apply, and the offensive team cannot pick up another first down.
- › If an offensive team is in the no run zone which applies to them and loses yardage due to a penalty or any play (for example: taking a knee, running out of bounds, negative yardage play) they are still considered as being in the no run zone.
- › As there are no kickoffs, the offensive team begins the game and second half by taking possession of the ball at its 5-yard line.





Down Format

K5 and 1st-2nd Grades

- › The offensive team has four downs to gain a first down by crossing midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has four downs to score a touchdown.
- › If the team fails to cross midfield in four downs or score a touchdown, the other team takes possession on its own 5-yard line. There will be no punts for this division. All four downs will be used without the concern of giving up field position.

3rd Grade and Up

- › The offensive team has four downs to gain a first down by crossing midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has four downs to score a touchdown.
- › On fourth down, a team has two options:
 - A team may attempt to gain a first down or a touchdown. If a team fails to convert on fourth down, either by scoring or picking up a first down, the ball changes possession at the no-run zone, before midfield going into the first down.
 - A team may “punt” as its fourth-down play by notifying the referee. In this case, the ball will be placed on the opposing team’s 5-yard line, and there will be a change of possession.



Offensive starting points

(K5-2nd Grades)

SITUATION	STARTING FIELD POSITION AFTER CHANGE OF POSSESSION
After a touchdown and extra point(s) attempt	Offense's 5-yard line
After a turnover on downs	Offense's 5-yard line
After an interception	At the spot of the interception

(3rd Grade and Up)

SITUATION	STARTING FIELD POSITION AFTER CHANGE OF POSSESSION
After a touchdown and extra point(s) attempt	Offense's 5-yard line
After a "punt"	Offense's 5-yard line
After a turnover on downs	No-run zone going into the first down (midfield line)



After an interception

At the spot of the
interception



Clock Format

- › Games consist of four 9-minute quarters with an 8-minute halftime.
- › The game clock stops briefly at the end of every quarter for predetermined substitutions.
- › Each team has one 30-second timeout per half. Unused timeouts do not carry over to the second half. The clock will stop during the timeout.
- › A 30-second play clock begins after the referee spots the ball as ready for play.
- › The clock will stop in the final minute of the first half and in the final minute of the game for the following situations:
 - After an incomplete pass
 - After the ball carrier goes out of bounds
 - After a touchdown
 - During an extra-point attempt
 - For an official's timeout
 - After an interception
 - During a called timeout until the ball is snapped
 - On a change of possession
 - For a penalty. Keep in mind the half or game may not end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines the penalty.

Game Format

Upward Flag Football leagues feature an enhanced game format.

- › Referees lead both teams in prayer at midfield before every game. This is a good time to give reminders about the game and to check that flags are on hips, jerseys are tucked in, jewelry has been removed, and coaches have their substitutions ready for the game.

- › The visiting team (wearing the lighter-colored jerseys) calls the coin toss. The team that wins the coin toss may choose to play offense or defense first or choose which goal to defend. The other team has the choice (possession or end to defend) not made by the team winning the toss. The team that plays defense first will play offense first to start the second half.
- › Because the end of a quarter does not signal a change of possession, the team with possession at the end of the first and third quarters will retain possession after substitutions take place.
- › Teams will switch ends of the field at the half, not after each quarter.
- › Score is not be kept in 2nd grade and under divisions.
- › Each team will have six players on the field at a time. This equips the offense with an appropriate amount of players without crowding the field.
- › Coaches are allowed to walk the sidelines and encourage their players without stepping in the playing area.
- › In the 3rd grade and up divisions, each team can put one coach in the huddle for the first two games of the season. In any division 2nd grade and under, each team can put one coach in the huddle throughout the season.
- › Teams will use substitution rules, as detailed below.

Substitutions

Upward Sports' substitution system is designed to provide each player equal opportunity for improvement. The system ensures that:

- › No player sits out more than one possession at a time.



- › Every player plays offense and defense in every game.
- › Every player will start on either offense or defense in each game.
- › In most cases, each player will play against someone of equal ability.
- › Coaches do not have to monitor playing time for each player.
- › Playing time for all players is virtually even over the course of the season.

Scoring

- › Touchdown: 6 points
- › Extra point: 1 point (played from the 5-yard line, no-run zone with a pass) or 2 points (played from the 10-yard line with a run or pass)
- › Safety: 2 points. The scoring team will also receive possession on its own 5-yard line. No physical kicks will occur in Upward Flag Football.

Offensive Basics

- › A minimum of three players must be on the line of scrimmage at every snap. Traditional football format requires seven players on the line of scrimmage at the snap of the ball. The three players on the line for Upward Flag Football will consist of a center and then two receivers positioned anywhere along the line of scrimmage. This adds some structure to offensive sets.
- › Only one player can be in motion when the ball is snapped. This is intact to keep the integrity of the game.

- › In the 3rd grade and up divisions, the ball is snapped between the legs to begin play. In any division 2nd grade and under players may use the side snap. The traditional snap can be difficult for the younger players with small hands.
- › Before handing off or passing, the quarterback must have complete, unshared possession of the ball. This also helps clarify the center sneak play. A possession change between the center and quarterback must occur in order to run a play.
- › A low-profile field cone or beanbag is used to mark the line of scrimmage.

Running the Football

- › The quarterback cannot run the ball across the line of scrimmage. This is in place to include others in each offensive play. Without this rule, a quarterback could dominate each play by advancing the football.
- › The person who receives the snap from the center (under-center or shot-gun) is considered the quarterback.
- › Direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are legal. Multiple handoffs may be used. After the ball crosses the line of scrimmage, handoffs and underhand or overhand forward or backward passes are not permitted.
- › The 5 yards leading toward the goal line and the 5 yards leading to the midfield first-down line are no-run zones. The no-run zones do not apply to the K5 division.
- › A player receiving a handoff or backward pass can pass the ball forward (halfback pass) from behind the line of scrimmage.



- › A ball carrier may not dive. A dive will result in a penalty. This is for safety and abides with the no contact rule.
- › The ball carrier's feet determine the spot of the football when a flag is pulled, not the location of the football. This is to discourage a dive for advancement.
- › If a ball carrier who has established possession of the ball, fumbles the ball into an opposing player's hands without the ball touching the ground, the play is considered a fumble. This is a dead ball at the spot where the player lost the ball. If however, a ball carrier attempts a legal or illegal pass and the hand and arm are coming forward it is ruled as a pass and therefore an interception.

Receiving the Football

- › All six players are eligible to receive passes. (The quarterback becomes eligible after a handoff or immediate pitch.) With the no contact rule, no blockers can be used thus allowing all offensive players to be eligible.
- › A completion consists of a receiver gaining control of the football in bounds while having at least one foot touch in bounds before stepping out of bounds. This rule is to keep the integrity of the game.
- › If a player catches a pass with any part of his body other than their feet or hands on the ground, the play is dead and the ball is spotted at the point of the completion. This rule helps to keep the no contact rule intact.
- › Simultaneous possession by an offensive and defensive player is awarded to the offensive player.



Passing the Football

- › A forward pass can be completed behind or beyond the line of scrimmage. Only one forward pass can be completed per play. However, while in the no-run zone, only a forward pass completed beyond the line of scrimmage may advance the ball out of the no run zone.
- › A backward pass can only be executed by the quarterback.
 - A backward pass can only occur while behind the line of scrimmage and only one completed per play.
 - A backward pass (over or underhand) includes a pass from the quarterback that travels parallel to the line of scrimmage or away from the end zone where the offense is attempting to score.
 - An incomplete backward pass is a fumble and a dead ball where it first hits the ground or before hitting the ground where it travels out of bounds.
- › Once the ball leaves the quarterback's hand, the defender can make a play on the ball. The defender must avoid contact with the receiver.
- › The quarterback has 7 seconds to throw a pass. If a pass is not thrown within 7 seconds, it is treated as an incomplete pass (loss of down). A handoff or pitch will end the 7-second pass count. This rule keeps a scrambling quarterback from taking too much time with each possession.



Dead Balls

Play is ruled dead when one of the following occurs:

- › The ball carrier's flag is pulled or falls out.
- › The ball carrier steps out of bounds.
- › The ball carrier's knee hits the ground.
- › A touchdown or safety is scored.
- › A pass falls incomplete.
- › At the point of an interception.
- › When the ball is fumbled, the ball will be spotted at the location where the player fumbled the ball.
 - One exception to this rule is for 2nd grade and under division players only. If a center/quarterback exchange is mishandled, the quarterback and only the quarterback may pick up the ball and continue play. If a legal defender gets to the ball before the quarterback, the play is ruled dead and the ball is spotted at the point of the fumble (treated like a sack).

Defensive Basics

- › Teams may run man-to-man, zone defenses or a combination of both. This rule allows for defensive schemes and helps equal ability match-ups. Players may have an easier time covering a zone vs. a receiver man-to-man in the open field.
- › Interceptions may not be returned. Change of possession will be awarded at the point of the interception. This rule will force a substitution so players will not sit out more than one possession at a time.



- › Interceptions made in the end zone will result in a touchback and the ball will be spotted at the 5-yard line. Interceptions cannot be returned, so the touchback is used for all endzone picks.

Rushing the Passer and the Rush Line

- › All players who are rushing the quarterback must begin 7 yards from the line of scrimmage. Before each snap, the referee will designate the 7-yard rush line with a small beanbag or low profile cone. The rush line extends in a straight line from sideline to sideline. With no blocking allowed, this gives the quarterback enough time to make a play or escape a rush.
- › With the 3rd grade and up divisions, any number of players may rush the quarterback. Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grade divisions may only rush one defender.
- › Defenders not rushing the quarterback may line up on or off the line of scrimmage. In the K5 division, three defenders must line up 7 yards from the line of scrimmage. Having three players line-up 7 yards from the line of scrimmage for the K5 group keeps the congestion from forming along the line of scrimmage. This is key since a majority of K5 plays are running plays.
- › Once the ball leaves the quarterback's hand, the 7-yard rule is no longer in effect, and all defenders may cross the line of scrimmage to pursue the ball carrier. This allows the defense to react quickly to a play behind the line of scrimmage.
- › A league director may adjust the distance of the rush line to 10 yards.



RULE	K5	1ST AN	3RD AN	5TH GR
KEEP PIN	NO	NO	YES	YES
NO-RUN	NO	YES	YES	YES
OPTION	NO	NO	YES	YES
COACH IN	ALL SEASONS	ALL SEASONS	GAMES 1-9	GAMES 1-9
DEFENDERS ALLOW	3	3	ALL	ALL
NUMBER OF RUSHER	1	1	ALL	ALL
SIDESNA	YES	YES	NO	NO

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Calling The Game

Chapter Overview:

- 28 How to Make a Call
- 29 What to Watch For
- 32 Penalties
- 38 Positioning and Responsibilities
- 40 Hand Signals



How to Make a Call

When a penalty is committed, the referee should throw a penalty flag in the direction of the penalty. Don't blow the whistle! Only blow the whistle when the penalty is a dead-ball penalty. Dead-ball penalties include delay of game, encroachment, false start and neutral zone infraction.

On the snap, it is critical that referees move based on the direction of play so that they are in position to make the right call. Once play begins, referees should not find themselves in a location where it hinders players' ability to see the field.

If the penalty was committed during play, the referee should throw the flag to mark where the penalty was committed and let the play continue. After the play has ended, the referee should treat the penalty as follows:

1. Quickly explain the penalty to players by telling them how it can be avoided and the result of the penalty. The extent of the explanation will vary according to the age and understanding of the players and will decrease as the season progresses
2. Ask the non-offending team if they wish to accept the penalty or decline the penalty and keep the result of the previous play.
3. Let the coach and fans know the reason for and consequence of the penalty.

Referees should use proper hand signals (see page 40) so that players, coaches and spectators know what occurred during the play. This adds to the enjoyment of the game.



What to Watch For

Upward Flag Football is governed by an enhanced set of rules. As a referee, it is your responsibility to know and uphold these rules. For a complete list of rules on Upward Flag Football, see pages 32-37 in this book.

Although you must watch for every penalty and be sure every rule is being upheld, this section will point out specific rules and the most common penalties followed by a definition of the football rules.

Illegal Rushing

Illegal rushing occurs when a defensive player is in front of the 7-yard rush line at the time of the snap and crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball leaves the quarterback's hands. All players rushing the quarterback must be behind the 7-yard rush line at the time of the snap. The 7-yard rush line is a straight line that extends from sideline to sideline.

Illegal Contact

Illegal contact can be called on offensive or defensive players. Any intentional contact, such as blocking, physically tackling, knocking a player down while attempting to pull a flag, holding, pushing, or jersey-pulling, will result in an illegal-contact penalty.

Pass Interference

Pass interference is called when a player physically impedes another player from having the full opportunity to catch a pass. This penalty can be called on an offensive or defensive player.



Illegal Run

An illegal run occurs when an offensive player runs the ball across the line of scrimmage while in the no-run zone. When the ball is snapped in the no-run zone, the offense must advance the ball with a forward pass completed at a point beyond the line of scrimmage. An illegal run also occurs when the quarterback runs across the line of scrimmage with the ball.

Illegal Pass

An illegal pass should also be called when a quarterback or runner passes the ball after crossing the line of scrimmage.

Flag Guarding

Flag guarding is when a ball carrier's arm or hand is used to prevent his flag from being pulled. This may be intentional or unintentional. Either way, it should result in a penalty.

Illegal Motion

When the ball is snapped one player lined up in the backfield may be in motion, so long as they are moving parallel to or away from the line of scrimmage. No player may be moving toward the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. All other players must be stationary. A receiver on the line of scrimmage or player under center may go in motion but must reset in a position prior to the snap.



Delay of Game

A delay-of-game penalty occurs when the offense does not snap the ball before the 30-second play clock runs out. Referees should warn the offense when the play clock reaches 10 seconds before expiration.

Lining Up Properly

Referees may help younger players line up properly. The offense should have three players on the line of scrimmage at the snap. Remind players of this as they line up. The line of scrimmage for each team is a vertical plane through the point of the ball nearest the team's goal line. Each player at the line of scrimmage should break the plane through the snapper's waist to the line of scrimmage with either their head or foot.

Center-Quarterback Exchange

In the Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grade divisions a fumbled Center-Quarterback exchange may only be picked up by the quarterback as play continues. If a defender begins from behind the 7 yard rush line gets to the ball before the quarterback, the ball is dead at the spot where it is touched by the defender and the offense maintains possession. (unless it was fourth down then see rules regarding change of possession)

For 3rd grade and up divisions a fumble on the Center-Quarterback exchange is treated as a fumble and is a dead ball.

This rule applies to both under center and shotgun snaps.



Flags on Hips/Jerseys Tucked In

In Upward Flag Football, all players are required to have their flags on their hips and their jerseys tucked in. Coaches should monitor that after each play. An offensive ball carrier who is not in compliance with this gains an unfair advantage against the defense. Out-of-position flags and untucked jerseys give an unfair advantage because they impede a defender from pulling the flag. As a referee, you need to be aware of this situation. When this occurs, the play should be blown dead at the first attempt at a flag pull. Assume that the defender would have been successful in pulling the flag if not impeded.

Penalties

Referees will call all penalties so that players learn the game.

If a penalty happens near the end zone, where the penalty yardage would place the ball in the end zone, then the penalty will be half the distance to the goal.

The Neutral Zone is defined as the space between the forward and backward tips of the football while it rests on the field prior to the snap.

A game or half can not end on a defensive penalty. The offense will be awarded one untimed play unless the penalty is declined.

Defensive Penalties

Defensive Pass Interference

A flag is thrown, and play continues. The penalty is 10 yards from the line of scrimmage and an automatic first down.

Pass Interference is contact or interference which hinders or restricts an opportunity for an eligible player to catch a forward pass after the ball has been thrown.



Encroachment

The whistle is blown, flag thrown, and play is dead immediately. The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and a replay of the down.

Encroachment occurs when a defensive player enters the neutral zone and makes contact with an offensive player or the football prior to the snap.

Illegal Contact

Flag is thrown, and play continues. The penalty is 10 yards from the spot of the foul and an automatic first down.

Illegal contact occurs by pulling the jersey, holding, blocking, pushing, physically tackling, or knocking a player down while attempting to pull a flag.

Illegal Flag Pull

Flag is thrown, and play continues. The penalty is 10 yards from the spot of the foul and an automatic first down.

This occurs when a defender pulls the flag of a receiver prior to catching the ball.

Illegal Rushing

A flag is thrown, and play continues. The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and a replay of the down.

Illegal rushing is enforced when a player who starts in front of the designated rush line (7 yards from the line of scrimmage) crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff or pass that leaves the quarterback's hands.

There is no penalty for a player who starts from behind the designated rush line and moves in front of the designated rush line so long as they do not also then cross the line of scrimmage.



Neutral Zone Infraction

The whistle is blown, flag thrown, and play is dead immediately. The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and a replay of the down.

When a defensive player moves into the neutral zone prior to the snap causing a nearby offensive player to react.

Offside

A flag is thrown, and play continues. The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and a replay of the down.

A player on defense is offside if they line up in or beyond the neutral zone at the snap.

Stripping

A flag is thrown, and play continues. The penalty is 10 yards from the spot of the foul and an automatic first down.

A defensive player may not attempt to strip the ball from the ball carrier.

Offensive Penalties

Delay of Game

The whistle is blow, flag thrown, and play is dead immediately. The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and a replay of the down.

Diving

A flag is thrown, and play continues. The penalty is 10 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss down. Ball carriers may not dive toward the end zone or first down.



False Start

The whistle is blown, flag thrown, and play is dead immediately. The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and a replay of the down.

When prior to the snap an offensive player in a set position then moves their body or the football to simulate the start of a play.

Flag Guarding

A flag is thrown, and play continues. The penalty is 10 yards from the spot of the foul and a loss of the down.

Flag guarding is intentional or unintentional use of the arm or hands to prevent a defender from pulling the flag.

Illegal Formation

A flag is thrown, and play continues. The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and a replay of the down.

Illegal Formation occurs when there are not three players lined up on the line of scrimmage.

Illegal Motion

A flag is thrown, and play continues. The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and a replay of the down.

It is illegal motion if a player under center goes in motion and fails to come to a complete stop for one second before the snap.

One player in the backfield, off the line of scrimmage, may be in motion prior to the snap but must be moving parallel to or away from the line of scrimmage.

If a player in the backfield or on the line of scrimmage is moving forward at the time of the snap, it is illegal motion.



If an eligible receiver on the line of scrimmage moves to another spot on the line of scrimmage they must come to a complete stop and may not be in motion prior to the snap.

Illegal Pass

A flag is thrown, and play continues. The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and a loss of down.

A pass thrown from beyond the line of scrimmage, more than one forward pass, more than one backward pass or a pass not completed beyond the line of scrimmage to advance out of the no-run zone.

Illegal Run

A flag is thrown, and play continues. The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and a replay of the down.

An illegal run is a running play that occurs in the no-run zone or a quarterback crossing the line of scrimmage after taking the snap.

Illegal Use of the Hands

A flag is thrown, and play continues. The penalty is 10 yards from the spot of the foul and loss down.

Illegal use of the hands occurs by stiff-arming or a player using their hands or arms in an attempt to stop or block an opponent.

Intentional Grounding

A flag is thrown, whistle is blown, and the play is dead on the incomplete pass. The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and a loss of down.

Intentional ground occurs when a passer, who is under pressure, throws a forward pass without a realistic chance of a pass completion. Intentional



grounding also occurs if a quarterback delays a spike and is or is not under pressure and throws the ball to the ground.

Intentional grounding if in their own end zone when the ball is thrown the result is a safety.

Offensive Charging

A flag is throw, and play continues. The penalty is 10 yards from the spot of the foul and a loss of down.

Offensive charging occurs when an offensive player makes no attempt to avoid a defender and instead initiates contact and attempts to run through or knock down the defender.

Offensive Pass Interference

A flag is thrown, and play continues. The penalty is 10 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss down.

Pass Interference is contact or interference which hinders or restricts an opportunity for an eligible player to catch a forward pass after the ball has been thrown.

This includes an offensive player shoving or pushing a defender to create separation in order to catch a pass and when the ball is in the air setting a pick on a defender.

Offside

A flag is thrown, and play continues. The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and a replay of the down. A player on offense is offside if they line up in or beyond the neutral zone at the snap.

Shielding

A flag is thrown, and play continues. The penalty is 5 yards from the spot of the foul and a loss of down.



Shielding is a non-contact block that impedes a defender from making a tackle. This could be other offensive players running immediately side by side, in front of or behind a ball carrier to impede defenders from making a tackle.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

A flag is thrown, and play continues. The penalty is 10 yards from the line of scrimmage and if against the offense a loss of down or against the defense an automatic first down.

Unsportsmanlike conduct includes any form of rough play or unsportsmanlike behavior such as taunting. If the severity of the conduct warrants it, remove players for the remainder of the game.

Positioning and Responsibilities

One of the most important elements of being a referee is being in the right position to best see your area of responsibility. Upward Sports™ suggests having no fewer than two referees on the field of each game. Each referee will be assigned a number and a set of responsibilities. Referee #1 will be positioned on the line of scrimmage and will watch the offensive line and backfield. Referee #2 will be positioned at the defensive 7-yard rush line and will watch the defensive backfield. Referees must also be able to see the sidelines. This can best be accomplished by lining up diagonally from each other so each sideline will be covered by a referee. On the snap, referees should move based on the direction of the play. Don't stay in your starting position.

Primary Responsibilities of Referee #1



- › Watch for penalties behind the line of scrimmage—things like illegal motion and illegal passes.
- › Mark the line of scrimmage with a low-profile cone after each play.
- › Keep the 7-second pass count.
- › Begin the 30-second play clock after ball has been spotted.
- › Keep track of 30-second timeouts.

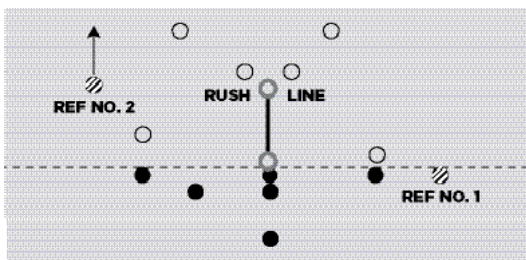
Primary Responsibilities of Referee #2

- › Mark the rush line by standing 7 yards from the line of scrimmage. A bean bag or low-profile cone can mark the rush line.
- › Watch eligible pass rushers.
- › Watch for penalties beyond the line of scrimmage.
- › Keep the game clock.

Responsibilities of Both Referees

- › Keep track of downs.
- › Watch for penalties.
- › Watch the sidelines.
- › Spot the ball.
- › Move the cones or markers that mark the line of scrimmage and rush line.
- › Blow the whistle to end play. When one referee blows the whistle, the other should as well.
- › Monitor players to be sure flags are on hips and jerseys are tucked in.

Proper Starting Position for Referees:



Once a play begins, referees should not find themselves in a location where it hinders players' ability to see the field.

Hand Signals



Touchdown or Extra Point

Extend arms straight above head to signify that a touchdown was scored or an extra-point attempt was successful.



Safety

Put palms together above head to show that the defense scored a safety.



First Down

When the offensive team gains enough yardage for a first down, point with right arm at shoulder length toward the defensive team's goal.



Fourth Down

Raise one arm above head with hand in a closed fist to show that the offense is facing fourth down.



Completed Pass

Place hands in front of face, elbows bent. Pulling elbows down, clench the hands to form fists.





Delay of Game

Fold arms in front of chest.



False Start or Illegal Formation

Rotate forearms repeatedly in front of body.



Illegal Use of Hands

Grab one wrist and extend the open hand of that arm forward in front of chest.



Incomplete Pass

Shift arms in a horizontal fashion in front of body.



Interference

With open hands vertical to the ground, extend arms forward from shoulders.



Illegal Motion

Flatten out hand and make a horizontal arc with it.



No Run Zone / Extra Point (5) Yard Goal line:

A. The ball must be passed beyond the line of scrimmage if no rush from defense occurs during down.

B. The player who received the direct snap will be the only person to advance the ball, pass and/or run if there is a rush from defense.

C. The player who received the direct snap cannot pitch and/or toss the ball behind the line of scrimmage to another player/teammate while in the no Run-Zone.

D. Exception: No run zone, the quarterback or player who received the direct snap may advance the ball without a penalty if the defense has rushed and crossed the line of scrimmage.

E. No Run Zone: Illegal Rush, if defensive player rushes and has broken the line of scrimmage under the (7) yard rush line. The penalty result:

1. (5) Yards from Previous Spot, Repeat the down.
2. If ball is advanced: Coach will have a choice, take result of the play and next down, and/or previous spot plus (5) yards repeat down.

F. Goal Line: If an illegal rush penalty is to occur at the No Run Zone at the goal line, The penalty result:

1. Half the distance to the goal line, repeat the down.
2. If ball is advanced and results in a score/extra point, the penalty will be declined and points will be awarded.

Coaches and Players:

- Remember ALL our officials are Human & VOLUNTEERS.
- Coaches are responsible for the behavior of their Assistant Coaches, parents, and athletes. – if a Coach, Player and/or Parent are behaving poorly, the team itself risks being penalized.
- Respect the calls of the Referees, Coaches are welcome to ask for clarification if they don't understand a call.
- Once a dispute or challenge has been settled & play resumes, the situation will not be revisited after the game with officials on the field. You may follow up with any questions about a rule dispute or questionable call after the game has ended with the league directors.
- All Coaches, Players & Parents will refrain from any type of negative behavior towards any officials.
- Verbal Threats, Hostility and/or violence will not be tolerated and will result in penalties and or disqualification from future games and/or removal for remainder of the Upward Flag Football Season.
- Honor the game by displaying Sportsmanship and respecting the rules and the officials, staff, and opponents.
- The Event Staff and Officials reserve the right to interrupt and/or stop any game which is not operating in the realm of good sportsmanship.



Un-sportsmanlike Conduct & Suspension's:

- Fighting – Zero Tolerance (Immediate Disqualification/ Removal from the VC Upward Flag Football Program)
- Verbal threat towards official: 1st Penalty offense will result in a 10-yard penalty and possible ejection for coaches and players the remainder of that current game or future games.
- Verbal threat towards official: 2nd penalty offense will result in a 10-yard penalty & automatic disqualification for the Coaches, Players, and Spectators for the remainder of the game and possible future games/ season. (If an ejection occurs it will result in a Two (2) game suspension, unless the VC Flag Football league directors finds that ejection/Suspension needs to be shortened or extended from participation.

