

**BISMARCK PARKS & RECREATION DISTRICT  
FLAG FOOTBALL RULES**

GENERAL RULES

- A coin toss determines first possession
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has three (3) plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three (3) plays to score a touchdown. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on its 5-yard line.
- If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its 5-yard line.
- Teams change sides after the first 20 minutes, but possession does not change, and the clock does not stop.
- Play will be 7-on-7 OR 8-on-8, based on team roster size and number of players present. Coaches will make this decision together, prior to the start of each game.

TIMING/OVERTIME

- Games are 40 minutes with running clock.
- If the score is tied at the end of 40 minutes, teams move directly into overtime. The first team to score wins.
- Each time the ball is spotted a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.
- Each team has one 60-second time out and one 30-second time out per half
- Officials can stop the clock at their discretion

SCORING

- Touchdown: 6 points
- Extra Point: 1 point (played from 5-yard line), 2 points (played from 12-yard line)
- Safety: 2 points

RUNNING

- The quarterback cannot run with the ball
- Only direct handoffs or pitches behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Offense may use multiple handoffs.
- "No-running zones," located 5 yards from each end zone and 5 yards on either side of midfield, are designed to avoid short-yardage, power-running situations.
- The player who takes the handoff or pitch can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball has been handed off or pitched, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a defensive player (no diving).
- The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.

- All fumbles at the line of scrimmage or in the backfield can be advanced only by the offensive team. All other fumbles are dead at the spot of the fumble, possession remains with the offensive team.

### RECEIVING

- All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage)
- As in the NFL, only one player is allowed in motion at a time.
- A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.

### PASSING

- All passes must be forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage
- Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
- The quarterback has a seven-second "pass-clock." If the pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, play is dead, loss of down. Once the ball is handed off, the seven-second rule is no longer in effect.
- Interceptions are dead balls. Interceptions are change of possession at the spot of the interception.

### DEAD BALLS

- The ball must be snapped between the legs, not off to one side, to start play
- Substitutions may be made on any dead ball
- Play is ruled "dead" when:
  - Ball carrier's flag is pulled
  - Ball carrier steps out of bounds
  - Touchdown or safety is scored
  - At the point of an interception
  - Ball carrier's knee hits the ground
  - Ball carrier's flag falls out.

### RUSHING THE QUARTERBACK

All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped and wait a count of five seconds. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend the line of scrimmage.

Once the ball is handed off or pitched, the seven-yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage. A special marker, or the referee, will designate seven yards from the line of scrimmage. Remember, no blocking or tackling is allowed.

### SPORTSMANSHIP/ROUGHING

If the field monitor or referee witnesses any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking, or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped, and the player will be ejected from the game/tournament. **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.**

Trash talking is illegal. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. (Trash talk is talk that may be offensive to officials, opposing players, teams, or spectators.) If trash

talking occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.

### PENALTIES

The referee will call all penalties.

#### Defense:

- Offsides - 5 yards, automatic first down
- Interference - 10 yards, automatic first down
- Illegal contact (holding, blocking, etc) - 10 yards, automatic first down
- Illegal flag pull (before receiver has ball) - 10 yards, automatic first down
- Illegal rushing (starting rush from inside 7-yard marker) - 10 yards, automatic first down.
- NO zone defense

#### Offense:

- Illegal Motion (more than one person moving, false start) - 5 yards, loss of down
- Illegal Forward Pass (pass received behind line of scrimmage) - 5 yards, loss of down.
- Offensive Pass Interference - (illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender) - 10 yards and loss of down
- Flag Guarding - 10 yards (from line of scrimmage) and loss of down
- Delay of Game - clock stops, 10 yards and loss of down
- Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal play. All penalties will be assessed from line of scrimmage.
- Only the team captain may ask the referee questions about the rule clarification and interpretations. Players cannot question judgment calls
- Games cannot end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.