



VAIL RECREATION DISTRICT 2021 FLAG FOOTBALL LEAGUE RULES

GROUND RULES

1. Games will be played at Homestake Peak field on Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights. Should snow end the season early, refunds will not be issued.
2. The Vail Recreation District ("VRD") reserves the right to expel any individual or team from the league for reasons of malicious or unsportsmanlike conduct, failure to observe rules, regulations and procedures. Fighting, taunting or offensive language of any kind will not be tolerated.

PLAYER ELIGIBILITY/ROSTERS

1. Players must be at least 18 years of age by the first game of the season.
2. A team roster shall consist of a maximum of 20 players. Do not be caught shorthanded - plan ahead.
3. *Rosters must be turned in prior to the first game.* Rosters must be signed and filled out completely by players, managers, and coaches.
4. Changes/additions to your roster must be made the Friday prior to a Sunday game. New players must sign the roster before the start of the game.
5. Team managers are responsibly to ensure **all** players have been listed on the field roster.
6. After the 5th week of play, rosters are frozen and your team may not add additional players.

TEAM AND GAME ORGANIZATION

1. Games shall be played by two teams of six (6) players each.
2. Each team must have at least five (5) players at all times on the field. Failure to field at least 5 players results in that team's forfeiture.
3. A minimum of three (3) offensive players must be on the line of scrimmage at the snap.
4. When rushing the quarterback on any play, the defense must line up at least **5 yards** off the line of scrimmage prior to the snap - there will be a second beanbag to mark this line. All other defensive players may line up within this **5 yard** line & may only cross the line of scrimmage when the Quarterback exchanges the football with another offensive player (halfback, running back, throws the ball, etc.). Otherwise, players within the **5 yard** line may cross the line of scrimmage to shadow block players other than the Quarterback in the offensive backfield.
Illegal Defensive Man Downfield penalty - 10 yard penalty from the line of scrimmage.
5. Rushes from the backfield must be initiated with a handoff to another offensive player. The Quarterback (see Rule #4 for definition) is NOT allowed to rush the football across the line of scrimmage at any time.
6. Game time marks forfeit time. Show up early. There is NO grace period.
7. **Only the designated captain may talk to officials. The captain's first choice of any option provided by the referee is final. Any other players beyond these two captains who complain about a call will be charged for unsportsmanlike conduct (15-yard penalty).**
8. Game time consists of two (2) twenty (20) minute halves – running clock. There is a five (5) minute period between halves. There will be a twenty-five (25) second play clock between plays. Two (2) one-minute time-outs are awarded to each team to start each half.
9. In the last two (2) minutes of the second half, the clock stops under the following scenarios:

- A. Two-minute warning (30 seconds) – clock restarts on snap
 - B. Incomplete pass – clock restarts on snap
 - C. Out of bounds – clock restarts on snap
 - D. Penalty – clock restarts on snap
 - E. Touchdown – clock restarts on snap
 - F. Extra point – clock restarts with next possession
 - G. Time-outs – clock restarts with snap
 - H. Change of possession – clock restarts at new offensive team’s snap (**includes interceptions**)
 - I. Official’s time out – clock restarts at referee’s discretion
10. The above rule #9 will also apply to the first half of all post-season playoff games.
11. Playing field – 80 yards divided into 3 first down zones - 20 yards long each zone. To earn a first down, the ball must cross this 20-yard zone line. There are two end zones 10 yards long on each end of the field.

GAME POINTS

THE GAME WILL BE CALLED IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING OCCURS:

1. After 10 minutes of play in the second half, one team leads another by 32 points or more.
2. If one team is ahead by 17 points or more and it has possession of the ball with less than 2 minutes left in the second half.
3. Unacceptable and unsportsmanlike behavior by any team(s) – referee’s discretion.

SCORING

The following scenarios constitute a scoring play:

- A. Touchdown – 6 points
The player’s front foot and ball, or “downed ball”, must break the plane of the goal line to be considered a touchdown.
- B. Extra-point attempts (after a touchdown)
 1. Running – 2 points
 2. Passing – 1 points ... **must be a forward pass & cross the line of scrimmage.**
- C. Safety – 2 points
After a safety occurs, the scoring team puts the ball in play at the 20-yard line.
- D. Returned extra point attempts by defense – 2 points ... can occur by way of interception.

TIE GAMES

IN CASE OF A TIE SCORE AT THE END OF REGULATION TIME, THE TWO FIELD CAPTAINS SHALL MEET WITH THE REFEREES AT MIDFIELD - A COIN WILL BE FLIPPED TO DETERMINE THE OPTION THROUGH AN EXTRA SERIES OF PLAY.

1. Each team shall be permitted **one time-out** during overtime. The final score shall be determined by totaling all points scored by each team during the regulation game and the overtime period(s).
2. To start overtime, the offensive team (A) shall put the ball in play at the 1st and goal on the defensive team’s (B) 10 yard line. Team shall have a series of 4 downs. The 4-down series shall be terminated if team A scores any points or if team B gains possession at the end of any down. Team A shall be awarded a new series when:
 - A. The penalty for defensive pass interference is accepted;

OR

- B. When team B is guilty of roughing the passer.
 - C. Unsportsmanlike conduct occurs.
3. If a team scores a touchdown, it is entitled to try for extra point, except when it is unnecessary to break the tie. If team B gains possession, the ball becomes dead immediately and team A's 4-down series ends.
 4. After team A completes its series, team B becomes the offensive team - the ball will start at the 10-yard line. The same end of the field will be used by both teams when beginning a possession in order to insure equal game conditions and in order to conserve time.
 5. If the score remains tied after each team has been given on (1) 4-down series, the procedure shall be repeated with another overtime period until a winner is determined.

THE FIELD

Field size ...	80 yard length
At 1 st possession, ball begins on ...	20 yard line
1st down zones ...	3 @ 20 yards length
5-yard penalties ...	5 yards
10-yard penalties ...	10 yards
15-yard penalties ...	15 yards
End zones ...	10 yards length
Extra point attempt, ball begins on ...	3 yard line

GAME EQUIPMENT

- A. The ball will meet the specifications of size, shape, and weight for a regulation high school football game – the VRD will provide the official game ball.
- B. **A team must have similar color jerseys.** The field supervisor will make the determination on playability of team jerseys. It is the coach's responsibility to make sure his/her team has matching color jerseys.
- C. No article of clothing may cover any portion of player's flag. Shirts must be tucked into pants/shorts at all times.
- D. All-turf shoes are recommended. Shoes must be a one-piece, molded bottom. *Metal spikes are prohibited* Athletic shoes or plastic cleats only.
- E. The use of headgear of any nature, shoulder pads, body pads, shoes with removable cleats, or any unyielding or dangerous equipment is prohibited. Players may use an ace bandage, no more than two turns thick, in any given area on their body – it can only be anchored at each end of the bandage by tape not to exceed two turns around that body part. *Arm pads & knee pads are allowed.*
- F. Stickum of any kind (on ball, body, gloves) is illegal. Failure to comply with this rule will result in ejection.
- G. A referee is considered part of the game. If a ball hits a referee in the air without touching the ground first, the ball is considered a 'live ball.'

The following penalties will be assessed for any illegal equipment use such that: The player and/or team being charged will receive an unsportsmanlike foul (15 yards), the individual(s) will receive a 2-minute penalty, and that individual(s) will be ineligible to participate until approved by referee. **Excessive foul language will result in the same consequences.**

DEFINITIONS

1. FUMBLES:

- A. Play is dead when ball touches the ground.
- B. Ball is marked where it touches the ground, except when offensive team would gain added yardage, the ball is then marked where the player lost control of the ball.
 - B. When the ball is fumbled into the opposing team's end zone by the offensive team, a touchback is awarded.
 - C. Unsportsmanlike conduct occurs on the defense (team B).

2. PUNTS/KICKS:

- A. **NO KICKOFFS:** Games start with a "flip of the coin".
 - The team that wins a coin toss must choose one of three (3) options:
 - 1) Begin with ball
 - 2) Defend east or west goal
 - 3) Defer starting with ball until second half
 - *Offensive team starts on the 20-yard line.
 - 2nd Half: Teams will switch defensive goals and the team that lost the "flip of the coin" at game start may choose between "Ball" or defense.
- B. Protection on scrimmage kicks (punt): When a scrimmage kick is to be made, the kicking team must announce to the referee, before the ball is ready for play, that it wishes protection. After such announcement, the kick must be attempted. Exception: **a team is charged a time-out if they change their option from kicking to another play type. If a team has no time-outs to give, they will be assessed a delay of game penalty and replay the down.**
- C. Formation on protected scrimmage kicks: **Both** teams must have four (4) motionless players on the line of scrimmage until after the ball is kicked. There can be **two** defensive players (returners) lined up to receive the kicked ball. Once the ball is kicked, the offense may release without creating contact with the defense. No wedge formations are permitted.
- D. Kicking the ball: The kicker should be at least 5 yards behind the line of scrimmage. The kicker may take a direct snap. Note: The ball is not dead if it touches the ground; the kicker may pick up the ball off the ground. After receiving the snap, the kicker must kick the ball within 10 seconds in a continuous motion.
- E. When a scrimmage kick has crossed the neutral zone, the receiving/defensive team must catch the ball in the air or on one (1) bounce. If the receiver "**muffs**" the ball (misses the catch or catches it after 2 bounces), the ball becomes a 'dead ball.' This ruling is at the referee's discretion. If the ball touches a player from either team and then hits the ground, the ball is dead and belongs to the receiving team where contact was made, unless the receiving team touches the ball & both feet are in bounds when touched in the end-zone (touchback is ruled).
- F. If the ball hits a player of the receiving/defensive team (and remains in the air) and is then caught in the air, it can be advanced by the receiving team. The ball can also be recovered by the kicking team and not advanced if the receiver remains motionless on the field after the catch.
- G. If any kick becomes dead in receiving team's end zone, a touchback is ruled.
- H. A change of possession takes place as soon as the ball is kicked. Therefore no "loose ball" fouls are able to occur.
- I. Quick kicks penalty - loss of down & 15 yards assessed at line of scrimmage.

3. SNAP, PASSES & CATCHES:

- A. Legal snap: A legal snap shall be such that the ball immediately leaves the hand or hands of the snapper **between** his legs and touches a backfield player or the ground before it touches a lineman. The snap may hit the ground and be live for the quarterback only if it's caught off of the bounce in one continuous motion. Any center sneak play is illegal. The center cannot receive the ball back through his legs from a backfield player.
Illegal Snap penalty: Loss of down and 5 yards assessed at line of scrimmage.
- B. Forward pass: Only 1 forward pass per down
Spot foul – Loss of down and 5 yards penalty assessed at line of scrimmage.
- C. Lateral: An unlimited number of passes thrown overhand or underhand behind or parallel to the passer's end line is permitted.
- D. Eligible receivers: all players are eligible to receive passes.
- E. **Legal catch:**
 - 1. One (1) foot must be on the ground & inbounds to be considered a legal catch.
 - 2. The ball is legally catchable until it hits the ground. The receiver must be inbounds to be legally catchable.
- F. **Sleeper play:** no offensive player who is 'spread' across the line of scrimmage shall be any closer than 5 yards away from the sidelines.
Sleeper Play Penalty: loss of down & 5 yard penalty assessed at line of scrimmage.
- G. The defensive must line up five (5) yards off of the ball in order to rush the quarterback. All other defensive players may line up anywhere within 5 yards but they cannot rush the quarterback.
- H. If a referee is hit by an attempted pass, the ball is a 'live ball' until it hits the ground.

4. REMOVAL OF FLAG:

- A. When a player's flag/belt is clearly taken away from the ball carrier/receiver, the down shall end and the ball is declared dead. A player who removes the flag/belt from the ball carrier should immediately hold the flag/belt above his/her head to assist the officials in determining where the ball is declared dead. The spot of the next down's ball spot will be determined by where the ball carrier's front foot was at the time his flag was removed by the opposing team.
- B. Loss of flags while a play is still in progress: In all situations where a play is in progress and a ball carrier loses his flag(s) either accidentally, inadvertently, or on purpose, the de-flagging call reverts to the opposing team simply tagging that player. Once tagged, the player is declared 'down'.
- C. Tagging: placing one or both hands anywhere between the shoulders and feet of an opponent who has the ball. The feet of the tagger may leave the ground to make a tag. Pushing, striking, slapping and holding are not permitted in order to tag a ball carrier.
Tagging penalty: Automatic 1st down & 15 yards assessed from line of scrimmage.
- D. Spinning: Any ball carrier that spins in order to avoid de-flagging/tagging **is** allowed.

5. BLOCKING

Offensive linemen are permitted to shadow block. Shadow blocking refers to blocking with hands behind the back. Attempting to make contact in any manner with one's hands during blocking will result an Illegal block penalty - 15 yards are assessed from the line of scrimmage.

Defensive linemen must avoid contact with other players when rushing or pursuing the quarterback. Contact with any offensive linemen will result in an Illegal Contact by the Defense penalty - 15 yard penalty assessed from the line of scrimmage.

6. TACKLING:

- A. An attempt to wrap the body of an opponent with one's hands or arms, thus impeding progress, results in a Tackling penalty – 10 yard loss assessed from line of scrimmage.
- B. Tackling or roughing any ball carrier that, in the opinion of the referee is clearly running to a sideline, for the purpose of knocking him/her out of bounds results in a Tackling/Pushing the Ball Carrier penalty - 15 yards from the line of scrimmage. Any ball carrier's progress can **only** be stopped by way of de-flagging/tagging.
- C. When a team is within the 20 yard line of the end zone, a tackle, a violent force out of bounds, or any other flagrant means of prevent the offensive team of making an **obvious** score will result in an automatic touchdown.

7. CHARGING:

The ball carrier may not run through or over a defensive player. The object is for the ball carrier to evade the defensive player. Charging penalty - 15 yards from the spot of the foul.

Note: the referee will differentiate between "tackling" & "charging" just as a basketball official would differentiate between "blocking" & "offensive charging".

8. CLIPPING:

Running or driving into the back of an opponent *below* the waist. Clipping penalty - 15 yards from the spot of the foul.

***Block in the Back:** Running or driving into the back of an opponent *above* the waist. Block in the Back penalty – 10 yards from the spot of the foul.*

9. PROTECTING FLAGS:

Players shall not protect theirs or other teammates' flags by blocking with their arms or hands or hurdling to stop an opponent from pulling or removing flags. Flag Protection penalty - 5 yards from the spot of the foul & a loss of down.

10. MOTION:

One (1) offensive player may be in motion at the time of the snap, but not in motion toward the opponent's goal line. All other players must be without movement in any part of their body or their extremities. Motion Penalty - 5 yards from line of scrimmage.

11. ROUGHING THE PASSER:

When any defensive player rushes the passer & while attempting to deflect or block the pass, their momentum carries them into the passer, 'roughing the passer' is called. Defensive players may not have any physical contact with the passer, whatsoever. Roughing the Passer penalty - 15 yards from the line of scrimmage & automatic 1st down.

12. STIFF ARM:

Extending one's arm into a locked, straight position to ward off an opponent Stiff Arm penalty - 10 yards assessed at the spot of the foul.

13. HURDLING:

An attempt by the ball carrier to jump over the upper body of a defensive player who is in an upright position – defined by standing, sitting, and kneeling. The runner may hurdle a player in the prone position to avoid injury – defined by lying down on the ground. Hurdling penalty - 15 yards assessed at the line of scrimmage.

14. **STANCE:**

Both teams must use a two point stance **only**; 3 or 4 point stances are not permitted. Stance penalty – 5 yards assessed at the line of scrimmage.

15. **DEFENSIVE PASS INTERFERENCE:**

When a defensive player who in the act of playing defense contacts an offensive receiving player and which causes the offensive player to not receive the ball/have fair advantage to catching the ball.

Defensive Pass Interference penalty – Automatic 1st down awarded to offensive team at the spot of the foul. *If this infraction occurs in the end-zone, the offense is awarded a 1st down & Goal scenario at the one yard line.*

16. **ILLEGAL/MISUSE OF FLAGS:**

Triple threat flag belts, as per manufacturer's specifications, are the only flags permitted for use. Flags must be worn as intended - flags, belts, and buckles must be worn outside or on top of all clothing. any looping, tying, cutting, or any other alterations made to one's flags will result in an Unsportsmanlike Conduct penalty - 15 yards will be assessed at the line of scrimmage & the player will be ejected for both the current and the next league game.

17. **STICKUM PENALTY:**

Any player or ball that uses any Stickup product will be ruled ineligible for game until the substance has been removed – referee discretion. Stickum penalty - 15 yards from the line of scrimmage.

18. **DELAY OF GAME:**

When on offense, a team that is unable to begin a play before the 25 second play clock expires will receive a 5 yard penalty (same set of downs for next play). On either offense or defense, a team that has too many/too few men on the field will also resulting in a delay of game. Calling for a timeout without having any timeouts to give will also result in a delay of game penalty.

ENFORCEMENT OF PENALTIES

1. **UNSPORTSMANLIKE PENALTIES:**

A. All unsportsmanlike penalties will result in the offending player(s) being removed from the game for a total of 2 game minutes & 15 yards assessed at the spot of the foul.

* Unsportsmanlike conduct towards an official, scorekeeper and/or league official will result in an unsportsmanlike penalty (15 yards), change of possession (if the offending team is on offense) & immediate player ejection or suspension, based on the referee's discretion.*

B. Teams may play with fewer than 6 players only if a player is out of play due to a penalty but who is also eligible to return later in the game.

C. Two unsportsmanlike penalties awarded to the same player or same coach will result in an ejection and possible suspension.

D. Any team having three (3) or more team members (player and coaches combined) who are ejected from any one (1) game will result in a forfeit to the offending team.

E. Three unsportsmanlike penalties by a team during any one (1) game will result in that team's forfeiture.

2. BOUNDARIES:

All players, coaches, and spectators will not be allowed inside the 10-yard line boundary surrounding the field while the game is in progress. Game boundary penalty – 5 yards assessed at the line of scrimmage.

3. APPLICATION OF PENALTY RULINGS:

- A. If any penalty committed by the offensive team occurs during a loose ball play (pass) the ball is played from the previous line of scrimmage and that down is played over.
- B. On a running play, any penalty committed by the offensive team is enforced from either the spot of the foul or at the end of the run after the player is ruled down, whichever results in the largest loss of yardage, & the down then is played over.

4. LOSS OF DOWN PENALTIES:

- A. Intentional Grounding – add'l assessment of a **5-yard** penalty awarded to opposing team
- B. Illegal Forward Pass – add'l assessment of a **5-yard** penalty awarded to opposing team
- C. Center Sneak Play – add'l assessment of a **5-yard** penalty awarded to opposing team
- D. Illegal Handling (ie: forward lateral) – add'l assessment of a **5-yard** penalty awarded to opposing team
- E. Offense Pass Interference – add'l assessment of a **10-yard** penalty awarded to opposing team

PENALTIES SUMMARY

5 YARDS	5 YARDS + LOSS OF DOWN	10 YARDS	15 YARDS	Spot Foul
Illegal Motion	Illegal Snap	Offensive Holding	Illegal Block Downfield (defense)	Defensive Pass Interference
Illegal Stance	Illegal Forward Pass	Block to the Back	Illegal Contact (defense)	
Non-flagrant stealing of ball	Sleeper Play	Holding Downfield (defense)	Tackling/Pushing the ball carrier (defense)	
Encroachment of Game Boundary	Protecting Flags	Illegal Man downfield (defense)	Charging	
Delay of Game	Illegal Handling (Forward Lateral)	Stiff Arm	Clipping	
	Center Sneak	Offensive Pass Interference	Rough the Passer (+ auto 1 st down)	
	Intentional Grounding		Hurdling	
			Illegal/Misuse of flags	
			Stickum	
			Flagrant Stealing of ball	
			Unsportsmanlike Conduct	

CODE OF CONDUCT

THE VRD HAS TAKEN THE POLICY OF PROSECUTING ANY PLAYER, COACH OR SPECTATOR THAT VIOLATES ANY TOWN OF VAIL MUNICIPAL ORDINANCE **SERIOUSLY**.

1. No player shall at any time lay a hand upon, push, shove, or threaten to strike or verbally threaten any referee, official, supervisor or spectator.
Ruling: The offending player will be suspended from all VRD sports programs/activities for one (1) full year.
2. Any additional player(s) involved in a physical altercation with another player, coach, supervisors or spectator will:
 - a. Be ejected from the game.
 - b. Receive a minimum of three (3) game suspensions.
 - c. Be placed on "probation".
3. Taunting, offensive language or unsportsmanlike behavior towards an official, supervisor, or staff member will result in the below listed items in the following order:
 - a. Ejection
 - b. Minimum of 1 game suspension
 - c. Probation
4. Officials and supervisors are empowered to warn, eject, and recommend suspensions for players and/or coaches for any misconduct or violation of rules.
5. Any player ejected from the game must leave the field, sidelines, and spectator area immediately. Failure to leave can result in the offending team's forfeit.
6. If a game gets out of hand, the referees, field supervisor, or any VRD official has the authority to call the game, resulting in a forfeit to the offending team.
7. All suspensions carry with them automatic probationary periods. Once a player(s), coach(s) and/or team(s) have been placed on probation, their conduct will be evaluated throughout the remainder of the season. Further conduct violations will result in a minimum 2-game suspension extending through the remainder of the season.
8. Team captains are responsible for the conduct of their players and spectators before, during, and after the game.
9. Intoxication is an unacceptable and dangerous state of mind in which to play a game. No player will be permitted to play if acting in an intoxicated manner or if, in the referee's or VRD official's discretion, he seems intoxicated. Penalty – offending player is ejected from the current game and is suspended for the next league game.