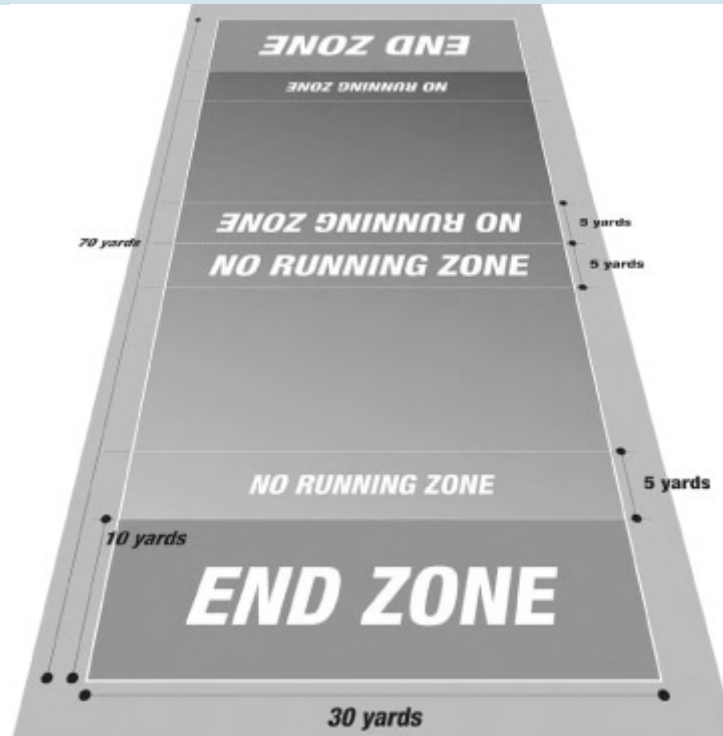


Rules Unique to Upward Flag Football

The rules unique to Upward Flag Football are designed to recognize that Every Child Is A Winner by promoting the following:

- Character
- Self-esteem

Field Diagram and Rules



- The offensive team is awarded a first down when it crosses the midfield line.
- 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 kindergarten division.
- The offensive team begins the game and second half by taking possession of the ball at its 5-yard line.

Down Format

K-5 and 1st-2nd Grades

- The offensive team has four plays to gain a first down by crossing midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has four plays 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.

3rd-6th Grades

- The offensive team has four plays to gain a first down by crossing midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has four plays 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 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

(3rd-6th grades)

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 the final minute of the game in 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

Game Format

Upward Flag Football leagues feature a unique 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 substitution cards prepared.
- 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 quarter will retain possession after substitutions take place.
- Teams will switch ends of the field at the half, not after each quarter.
- Score will not be kept in the K-5 or 1st-2nd grade divisions.
- Standings are not kept in any division. Such standings add unnecessary pressure and intensity.
- Each team will have six players on the field at a time.
- Coaches are allowed to walk the sidelines and encourage their players without stepping in the playing area.
- In the 3rd-6th grade divisions, each team can put one coach in the huddle for the first two games of the season. In the kindergarten and 1st-2nd grade divisions, each team can put one coach in the huddle throughout the season.
- Teams will use substitution rules, as detailed below.

Substitutions

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

- No child sits out more than one possession at a time.
- Every child plays offense and defense in every game.
- Every child will start on either offense or defense in each game.
- In most cases, each child will play against someone of equal ability.

- Coaches are not able to make unfair substitutions or to be accused of doing so.
- 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.

Implementing the System

Here are a few basics of the substitution system:

- Each team fields six players at a time.
- In each quarter, each team will have an offensive and defensive group, and this group will change in each quarter according to the substitution rotation.
- The coin toss will determine if the first group will play offense or defense first. The second group will play the opposite side of the ball for the entire quarter.

Filling Out the Substitution Form

Division commissioners should supply each coach with a team roster that includes each player's evaluation score. Using the team roster, place your two best passers in slots 1 and 7 (in that order) on the substitution form. These slots are the designated passer slots and were created to ensure that the team has a passer in the game at all times.

After filling in the passer slots, fill in the rest of the substitution form with your players' names according to their ability levels. Players should not be aware of this system or their rankings.

Each quarter, each team will have two groups: one for offense and one for defense.

To provide an example, we will create a 10-member team called the Hurricanes. Tommy, Chris, Julio, Shane, Jerome, Tim, Marc, Gregg, Felix, and Derek are ranked players 1-10. Because Tommy and Marc are numbers 1 and 7, they will be the designated passers. Excluding the two passers, Chris has the highest score and is assigned number 2. Derek is assigned number 10 because he has the most room for improvement.

Director Tip:

Before the first game, the coach needs to have his or her player rankings set. This ability ranking is based on both the player's evaluation score and the coach's talent assessment of each player (observed during practice). The player's ranking should not change once the season begins, as this could result in unequal playing time over the course of the season.

GAME #1		First Half				Second Half			
Player's Name	1st Quarter		2nd Quarter		3rd Quarter		4th Quarter		
	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	
1 TOMMY									
2 CHRIS									
3 JULIO									
4 SHANE									
5 JEROME									
6 TIM									
7 MARC									
8 GREGG									
9 FELIX									
10 DEREK									
11									
12									

The lineup on the first game day starts with player 1. Players 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 are group one and start the first quarter. That means the starting players for Game 1 are: Tommy, Chris, Julio, Shane, Jerome, and Tim. This will be the first group on the field. The coin toss will determine whether they are playing offense or defense. In our example, the toss was won by the Hurricanes, and they selected to play defense first, so the first group will begin on defense. The coach will circle DEF (defense) at the top of the first section of his/her substitution form.

GAME #1		First Half				Second Half			
Player's Name	1st Quarter		2nd Quarter		3rd Quarter		4th Quarter		
	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	
1 TOMMY	1	5		3		1	5		
2 CHRIS	2	6		4		2	6		
3 JULIO	3		1	5		3		1	
4 SHANE	4		2	6		4		2	
5 JEROME	5		3		1	5		3	
6 TIM	6		4		2	6		4	
7 MARC		1	5		3		1	5	
8 GREGG		2	6		4		2	6	
9 FELIX		3		1	5		3		
10 DEREK		4		2	6		4		
11									
12									

On the second game day, the lineup begins with player 2. Players 2-7 are group one.

GAME #2		First Half				Second Half			
		1st Quarter		2nd Quarter		3rd Quarter		4th Quarter	
		Off	Def	Off	Def	Off	Def	Off	Def
1	TOMMY		4		2	6		4	
2	CHRIS	1	5		3		1	5	
3	JULIO	2	6		4		2	6	
4	SHANE	3		1	5		3		1
5	JEROME	4		2	6		4		2
6	TIM	5		3		1	5		3
7	MARC	6		4		2	6		4
8	GREGG		1	5		3		1	5
9	FELIX		2	6		4		2	6
10	DEREK		3		1	5		3	
11									
12									

Substitutions on the third game day will start with player 3. Players 3-8 are group one.

GAME #3		First Half				Second Half			
		1st Quarter		2nd Quarter		3rd Quarter		4th Quarter	
		Off	Def	Off	Def	Off	Def	Off	Def
1	TOMMY		3		1	5		3	
2	CHRIS		4		2	6		4	
3	JULIO	1	5		3		1	5	
4	SHANE	2	6		4		2	6	
5	JEROME	3		1	5		3		1
6	TIM	4		2	6		4		2
7	MARC	5		3		1	5		3
8	GREGG	6		4		2	6		4
9	FELIX		1	5		3		1	5
10	DEREK		2	6		4		2	6
11									
12									

This rotation continues throughout the season. Additional examples and blank substitution forms are located in the back of the Coach and Referee Playbook.

If a team has 12 players, with 6 on the field and 6 off the field at all times, the offense/defense responsibility switches each quarter.

Scoring

- Touchdown: 6 points
- Extra point: 1 point (played from the 5-yard line 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.

Offensive Basics

- A minimum of three players must be on the line of scrimmage at every snap.
- Only one player can be in motion when the ball is snapped.
- In the 3rd-6th grade division, the ball must be snapped between the legs to begin play. K-5 and 1st-2nd grade players may use the side snap.
- Before handing off or passing, the quarterback must have complete possession of the ball.
- A low-profile field cone or beanbag may be used to mark the line of scrimmage.

Running the Football

- The quarterback cannot run the ball across the line of scrimmage.
- Direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are legal. Multiple handoffs may be used. After the ball crosses the line of scrimmage, handoffs and laterals are not permitted.
- A quarterback may immediately pitch or lateral the ball after receiving the ball (i.e., one motion). The option play, where the quarterback runs the ball down the line of scrimmage before pitching the ball, is prohibited.
- 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 kindergarten division.
- A player receiving a handoff or immediate pitch can pass the ball (halfback pass) from behind the line of scrimmage.
- A ball carrier may not dive. A dive will result in a penalty.

- The ball carrier's feet determine the spot of the football when a flag is pulled, not the location of the football.

Receiving the Football

- All six players are eligible to receive passes. (The quarterback becomes eligible after a handoff or immediate pitch.)
- A completion consists of a receiver gaining control of the football while having at least one foot in bounds.
- If a player catches a pass with his knee(s) on the ground, the play is dead and the ball is spotted at the point of the completion.

Passing the Football

- All forward passes must be caught beyond the line of scrimmage. Shovel passes are allowed but must be caught beyond the line of scrimmage.
- 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.

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.
- The ball hits the ground as a fumble. The ball will be spotted at the point of the fumble. One exception to this rule is with the center/quarterback exchange. If a snap is mishandled, the quarterback may pick up the ball and continue play.

Defensive Basics

- Teams may run man-to-man or zone defenses.
- Interceptions may not be returned. Change of possession will be awarded at the point of the interception.

Rushing the Passer

- All players who are rushing the quarterback must begin 7 yards behind the line of scrimmage. Before each snap, the referee will designate the 7-yard rush line.
- With the 3rd through 6th grade division, any number of players may rush the quarterback. The 1st and 2nd grade division may only rush one defender.
- Defenders not rushing the quarterback may line up on or off the line of scrimmage. In the K-5 division, three defenders must line up 7 yards behind the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball is handed off or pitched, the 7-yard rule is no longer in effect, and all defenders may cross the line of scrimmage to pursue the ball carrier.

Penalties

Referees will call all penalties.

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.

Defense

- **Encroachment:** The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down.
- **Illegal rushing** (enforced when players start rushing from inside the 7-yard rush line): The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down.
- **Interference:** The penalty is 10 yards from the line of scrimmage and an automatic first down.
- **Illegal contact** (pulling the jersey, holding, blocking, pushing): The penalty is 10 yards from the spot of the foul.

Offense

- **Illegal flag pull** (before the receiver catches the football): The penalty is 10 yards from the line of scrimmage and an automatic first down.
- **Illegal motion** (more than one person moving): The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down.
- **Illegal formation** (false start, not enough men on the line of scrimmage): The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down.
- **Illegal pass** (a pass is caught behind the line of scrimmage or thrown after the ball carrier has crossed the line of scrimmage): The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and a loss of down.
- **Delay of game:** The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down.
- **Shielding** (a non-contact block that impedes a defender from making a tackle): The penalty is 5 yards from the spot of the foul and loss of down.
- **Illegal run** (a running play in the no-run zone or a quarterback crossing the line of scrimmage): The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down.
- **Intentional grounding:** The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and a loss of down.
- **Offensive pass interference** (illegal pick play, pushing a defender): The penalty is 10 yards from the line of scrimmage and a loss of down.
- **Flag guarding** (intentional or unintentional use of the arm to prevent the flag from being pulled): The penalty is 5 yards from the spot of the foul and a loss of down.

- **Illegal use of the hands** (stiff-arming, blocking): The penalty is 10 yards from the spot of the foul and a loss of down.
- **Diving** (diving toward the end zone or first down): The penalty is 10 yards from the spot of the foul and a loss of down.