

# MSSP FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

**The home team is responsible for supplying a coach or representative to officiate; however a coach or representative from the opposing team is encouraged to assist.**

1. **Spirit of the Game: MSSP stresses sportsmanship and fair play. Competitive play is encouraged, but never at the expense of respect between players, adherence to rules, and the basic joy of play.**
2. Participants/players are NOT permitted in the schools, locker rooms or outside the gym without coach or parent supervision. Failure to comply with this rule could result in team suspension from the league.
3. The official field shall be 60 yards long and 40 yards wide. Each end zone will be an additional 10 yards deep unless the field is smaller (ex: Wheat Ridge Middle School). If the field is smaller, the field size will be adjusted as best as possible.
4. Players must wear their team t-shirt to all games. Shirts must be tucked in and cannot be altered in anyway.
5. Each player will be given a set of flags to wear during the game. Players may not wear the same color pants/shorts as flags. Flags must be worn properly. If they are altered in any way to make them more difficult to pull off, the ref will stop play and issue a 10-yard penalty to that team!
6. Shoes with cleats are allowed, but no metal spikes.
7. Mouth guards and shorts without pockets are strongly recommended for all players.
8. Each team will consist of 8 players on the field at one time.
9. **Time of Game:** the game shall be played in two 30-minute halves with a 5-minute half-time. The clock will run continuously, except for a score or timeout. There will be no overtime
10. The huddle clock (time between plays) is 30 seconds.
11. **Time Outs:** each team will be allowed two time-outs per half. Time outs will be 60 seconds in length.
12. **Scoring:** TD = 6 pts; Extra point from the 5yd. line = 1pt.; Extra point from the 10 yd. Line = 2pts., Safety = 2pts.
13. **TURNOVERS ON EXTRA POINTS CAN NOT BE RETURNED FOR A TOUCHDOWN**
14. **First Downs:** A first down shall be awarded to the offensive team each time they cross one of the 20 yard line stripes during four consecutive downs.
15. **Blocking and Contact:** No contact is allowed at any time. No 2-on-1 blocking at any time. Only screen blocking is allowed. Arms may not be used to block. Arms may be held against your own chest to protect yourself. Defensive players must go around the screen. Pushing and using hands against a screen is illegal. Pushing or knocking a player out of bounds is illegal.
16. **Rushing:** Defensive player must count, out loud, to 5 audibly (one-one thousand, two-one thousand..etc.) before rushing the passer. **The defense is NOT required to rush.**
17. **Quarterbacks:** Can not run with the ball until they are rushed by the defense (no quarterback sneaks). The QB will have no more than 7 seconds to throw and/or advance the ball to maintain flow of the game. Penalty results in a loss of down for the offensive team.
18. **Flag Pulling:** once the ball carriers flag is pulled, he or she is down at that spot. Should a flag accidentally fall off, the ball carrier is down at that point. If a flag falls off a receiver who subsequently catches the ball, he/she will be declared down immediately after the catch.
19. **It is illegal for the defense to intentionally pull the flag of a non-ball carrier.**
20. The ball carrier must have at least one foot on the ground at all time (no jumping). **The ball carrier cannot use a stiff arm, flag guard, dive, jump or hurdle at any time.**
21. **Line Formation:** On offense, teams must have 4 players anywhere on the line of scrimmage. All players are eligible to catch a pass. On punts, the defense must have 4 players anywhere on the line of scrimmage.
22. **Kickoffs:** At the beginning of the game, half, or after score, the ball will be put in play at the kicker's 20 yard line. The ball can be put into play by a place kick, punt or throw. The kicking team cannot recover or take possession of the ball but becomes a dead ball at the point of touch by the kicking team. If the ball does not travel 20 yards, the ball belongs to the receiving team at the point where it is touched or goes out of bounds. If the ball travels at least 20 yards and is kicked out of bounds or through the end zone, it will be brought back to the receiver's 20 yard line. Players can field a kickoff that has bounced and/or rolled. No onside kicks. If a kickoff goes out of bounds, the kicking team will receive a 5 yd penalty. If the receiving team's player returns a kickoff back for a touchdown effort will be made by the coach to change positions so the same participant does not run it back again.
23. **Punting:** Teams must declare a punt and allow the defense to set up if they are going to punt. On punting situations, the defense may not rush. In addition, neither team may cross the line of scrimmage until the

ball has been kicked.

24. **Safeties:** A safety can only occur when a player is de-flagged in the end zone. A kick after a safety can be a punt, place kick or throw from the 20-yard line. **If a ball is dropped or muffed in the end zone it will be returned to the previous spot with a loss of down.**
25. **Fumbles/Muffs:** Fumbles or muffed balls shall become dead at the spot of the fumble or muff. This includes incomplete laterals, dropped punts, dropped kickoffs and dropped snaps.
26. If a ball carrier's knee touches the ground, the ball is dead at that spot.
27. **Diving, jumping and hurdling are illegal on both offense and defense. Spinning is allowed as long as the participant's feet do NOT leave the ground.**
28. Only one forward pass per down (laterals are not considered forward passes).
29. When a receiver goes in the air for a catch near the sidelines, he/she must have at least one foot in bounds when he/she hits the ground.
30. A player on the line of scrimmage cannot receive the snap.
31. The ball will be moved to the middle of the field to be put in play, at the point where the ball carrier was de-flagged or the ball went out of bounds.
32. Only one offensive player can be in motion at the snap of the ball.

### PENALTIES

#### Down at spot of foul:

DB	PI	O	Diving, jumping or leaving your feet to avoid having your flag pulled.
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#### 5-yard penalties:

DB	LS	B	Not enough players on line of scrimmage
LB	LS	O	Illegal motion - 2 players moving at time of snap, or player in backfield moving before the snap.
DB	LS	B	Encroachment (Offsides)
DB	LS	O	Delay of game
DB	PI	O	Flag guarding
DB	PI	B	Intentional pulling of a non-ball carriers flag

#### 10-yard penalties:

LB	PI	B	Clipping (Blocking or pushing in the back)/Illegal contact
LB	LS	D	Premature flag pulling on a pass receiver (10 yds. + 1st down)
LB	LS	B	Grabbing or holding an opponent
LB	LS	B	Pass Interference Against offense (10 yds. + loss of down) Against defense (10 yds. + 1st down)
LB	LS	D	Roughing the passer (10 yds. + 1st down)
DB	LS	O	Spiking or throwing the ball in anger or celebration.
DB	PI	B	Tackling, pushing, tripping or unnecessary roughness
DB	PI	O	Stiff arming

#### 15-yard penalties:

DB	LS	B	Unsportsmanlike Conduct, Taunting, and Trash talking Against offense (15 yds. + loss of down) Against defense (15 yds. + 1st down)
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**TACKLING, AGGRESSIVE PLAY AND UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT WILL RESULT IN A 5-MINUTE SHORT-MAN SITUATION WITH THE OFFENDER SITTING OUT.**

#### KEY:

LB	Live Ball	Flag thrown and play continues. Offended team has option of taking penalty and down over or taking the result of the play.
DB	Dead Ball	Flag thrown and whistle blows play dead.
LS	Line of Scrimmage	Penalty is taken from the line of scrimmage.
PI	Point of Infraction	Penalty is taken from the point of infraction
O	Offense	Penalty is against the offense
D	Defense	Penalty is against the defense
B	Both	Penalty is against offense or defense.