

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 25-minute halves** with a 5-minute half-time. The clock will run continuously, except for a score or timeout. **If the margin of the score is over 20 points clock should not stop on scores.** There will be no overtime.

Timing Rules for last two minutes of the game if score is within 8 Points

-Clock will stop on all out of bounds, incomplete passes and scores if game remains within 8 points, extra points are not timed. Clock would begin again on the following kickoff.

-If the team on offense is trailing and commits a penalty, that will result in a 20 second run off before they can run another play unless they have a timeout remaining.

-If the team on offense is ahead and commits a penalty the clock will stop.

-If the team on defense is trailing and commits a penalty, the ball will be spotted with the penalty yardage, and once the ball has been spotted the play clock and game clock will begin, offense will get a new 30 second play clock.

If the team on defense is winning and commits a penalty the clock will stop.

10. The Play 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: Referee will count out loud, to 4 audibly. Preferably the official should be counting for both the rush and pass clock (one-thousand, two-one thousand..etc.)before rushing the passer. The defense is NOT required to rush.**

17. **Quarterbacks:** Cannot 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.

Players can field a kickoff that has bounced and/or rolled.

No onside kicks. If a kickoff goes out of bounds inside the 20 the ball will be spotted at the 25 yard line, 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. No Fake punts allowed.

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 by the offensive team that will also be considered a safety.**

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.

All Players Must Receive Equal Playing Time.

Playing time chart from basketball

# of players	Min/Max %	Min/Max playing time	
		20minute halves	16 min halves
10 or less	50% / 75%	20m / 30m*	16m / 24m*
11 to 15	33% / 50%	13m / 20m	11m / 16m

PENALTIES

Down at spot of foul:

DB PI O Diving, jumping or leaving your feet to avoid having your flag pulled.

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 From original line of scrimmage)

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)

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.

Revised 8/2/16