



GERMANTOWN FOOTBALL LEAGUE

OFFICIAL FLAG FOOTBALL RULES Adopted 2021

Coaching Registration

The GFL will only register a head coach (“Registered Head Coach”) and one assistant coach (“Registered Assistant Coach” or collectively the “Registered Coaches”). While registered coaches may enlist additional individuals to assist during practices and games, the GFL will only recognize the registered head coach and registered assistant coach as official coaches and representatives of their teams.

Draft Procedures

The primary goal of the draft is to fairly distribute the players within each division. By ensuring an equitable division of talent, the Germantown Football League (GFL) hopes to promote a healthy level of participation and competition. The draft typically occurs on a Saturday or Sunday following a week in which the players in each division are exhaustively evaluated and conditioned by the coaches within each division.

Order and Operations

1. The children of the Registered Coaches will receive protected draft status on each team. All other participants will be placed into the draft and are eligible for selection.
2. A Draft Matrix will be utilized to determine the order of selection with a lottery to be held to determine each team’s draft position within the Draft Matrix. Trading of draft positions is not permitted.
3. All coach’s children and protected players will have a draft round grade for the draft. Each head coach will submit a round grade for the other teams protected players. The average of that will be used to determine the round.
4. Teams will alternate picking players -one player per round regardless of age -until all eligible players have been selected. Although there are no restrictions on the order in which players from the older or younger age group may be selected by each team, there will be limits placed upon the total number of older and younger players that may be selected. This will ensure that each team has an equitable number of older and younger players.
5. Siblings who participate in the same division **MUST** play on the same team. Therefore, if a team selects a player with a sibling, the team must have an available pick in the subsequent round to acquire the sibling unless it occurs during the final round of the draft.
6. If a participant does not go through evaluations, he/she will be allocated to a team via a blind draw. This process is referred to as a hat pick. Hat picks will be distributed according to the order of the draft. Players who join the league after the draft automatically become hat picks and are allocated at the discretion of the Division Directors to ensure equitable numbers amongst all the teams.
7. If there are not enough players -who have gone through the evaluation process -to complete an entire round in the draft, these remaining players will become hat picks.
8. Trades are permitted subject to the approval by that league's Directors to ensure equity.
9. Division Directors will resolve any discrepancies or items not covered above. Amendments to the draft process remain at the discretion of the GFL Board.

Participation and Practice

Mandatory Participation: The Germantown Football League is a recreational program designed for all children to participate. All players are required to play a minimum of 10 snaps, including kick-offs. Every child must also be assigned a starting position and be a “meaningful” participant in the beginning of every game (not just kick-offs). Failure to adhere to the mandatory participation requirements shall subject the Registered Head Coach to penalties ranging from verbal warning, suspension, or removal from the league. The type of discipline assessed is in the sole discretion of the Board. Exclusions would include an injury or illness, parental request, or excessive absence from practice. The withholding of playing time for disciplinary reasons must first be cleared by the Division Director.

Age Limits: Children who are 5 or 6 years old as of August 1st are eligible to play flag football in the “Flag 5/6” Division. Children who are 7 or 8 years old as of August 1st are eligible to play flag football in the “Flag 7/8” Division -or- tackle football in the Mitey Mite Division.

Practice Times: Teams can practice for 5 days a week for the first two weeks of the season with a maximum of 8 hours per week. No weekend practice after the first two weeks. Thereafter, teams will be allowed up to 4 hours of practice time per week. A Wednesday game does not count against these limits. If a coach conducts a practice at a city field when the fields are closed for any reason, that team will forfeit future practices. It will be the responsibility of each coach to check the Parks and Recreation Hotline to ensure the facilities are either open or closed.

Rules of Play and Conduct

Playing Field:

The dimensions of the field will be 36 yards wide by 60 yards long (goal line to goal line) divided into 4 zones of 15 yards each. Playoff and Bowl Games are usually held at the GFL Fields, although in the past they have been played at Germantown and Houston High School.

Equipment:

- Every player must wear a GFL issued belt with flags.
- If a player loses his flag prior to gaining possession of the ball, he will be considered down where he takes possession.
- Flags must remain on a player’s hips / waist in the proper positions.

- Intentionally twisting or rotating the flags or flag belt is NOT permitted.
- All flags must be the GFL team issued length and width. Anything else is strictly prohibited and if used may result in forfeiture of the game.
- Flags from a previous season are NOT permitted.
- K-2 footballs are the official GFL game balls and must be used - no exceptions.
- Shirt-tails must be completely tucked in. No clothing is permitted to cover the flag or flag belt.
- Mouth pieces must be worn at all times during practice and game - no exceptions.
- For Flag 7/8 Division, GFL soft-shell helmets must be worn at all practices and games - no exceptions. Any players without a soft-shell helmet will not be allowed to play.
- Football cleats should be worn. NO METAL cleats are allowed.
- Nothing may be worn that can cause injury to another player.
- Players ineligible to advance the football must have a 2 inch piece of colored tape on the rear of their helmet or wear a number that designates they are ineligible to advance the football.

Team: Nine (9) players will constitute a team. Teams may play with one less player without having to forfeit. GAME TIME IS FORFEIT TIME.

Coaches: Only registered coaches can be on the field with their team during a game. One coach may stay on the field for offense and defense. The on the field coach may not give any instructions after the offense or defense has been set or after the ball has been snapped. Coaching from the sideline is permitted at any point in time during the game.

Game Time: All games will have two twenty minute halves with a running game clock and an eight minute halftime. The clock does not stop except for:

- Touchdown
- PAT
- Time-Outs
- Injuries (requires player to leave the field for one play)
- Incomplete passes

- Out of bounds
- Movement of chains
- Change of possession

Standard clock rules apply within the last two minutes of the first and second half. For example, an incomplete pass within two minutes of the half will result in a stoppage of the clock.

If at the end of regulation the score is tied, only one overtime period will be played. A coin flip will determine choice of offense, defense or side of field. The ball will be spotted at the 15 yard line and each offense will have four downs to score. Interceptions and fumbles may be returned for scores by the defense. The game will result in a tie if the score is equal at the end of the single overtime period. Play-off games will have multiple overtime periods in order to determine a winner.

A team is allowed 3 one minute time-outs per half and do not carry into overtime. One timeout will be awarded for each team during each overtime period.

First Downs: Each team receives four (4) downs to cross the first zone line in advance of the ball or the goal line. A loss behind a zone line followed by an advance past that same zone line DOES NOT constitute a first down.

Scoring: Points will be scored as follows

- Touchdown counts for 6 points
- Points after touchdown (PATs)
 - a. 1 point from the 2 yard line
 - b. 2 points from the 3 yard line
- Offense must declare to the official PRIOR to huddle. Points may be made by passing or running
- Safety counts for 2 points

Blocking and Defensive Alignment: Offensive players may extend arms forward with palms open to make contact with defensive player's body. PLAYERS are not permitted to "run over or through" another player in an effort to block or avoid being blocked.

TSSAA blocking rules apply, inclusive of:

- No chop blocks outside of the neutral zone
- No pick plays
- No crack back blocks

Flag 5/6 and Flag 7/8 - A Gap Rule (Offense & Defense)

1. **Offense** – A Gap Rushing is off limits from QB's under center (QB sneak). A Gap Rushing is permitted from a shotgun position or via a handoff to RB. Ball carrier must be lined up 3+ yards behind line of scrimmage.
2. **Defense** – Lining up or rushing the A Gaps is not permitted from a D-line position. A Gap may only be rushed from a defensive linebacker position 5+ yards back from the line of scrimmage. A player along the defensive line may not line up between the offensive guards. They can line up over the guards.

Special Teams:

- Kick-offs will not be allowed.
- Play begins at the start of 1st half, 2nd half, and following touchdowns / safeties by spotting the ball on the 15-yard line of the offensive team.
- Live punting will not be allowed. 4th down is like any other down. Teams are given 30 seconds to run a play or elect to punt. If the coach wishes to run the 30 second play clock down to zero before electing to punt, he may do so. However, failing to get a play off or electing to punt within 30 seconds will result in a delay of game. If a delay of game penalty is enforced, the referees will not start the clock again until the snap of the ball on the next play. Once the coach elects to punt, the official will stop the clock and mark the ball accordingly.
- If a team elects to PUNT, the ball will be spotted on the second zone line in advance of the ball unless the team is inside the 30-yard line of the defensive team. In this situation, the ball will be spotted on the next zone line in advance of the ball. No punt shall be placed inside the 15 yard line.
- Field goals are not allowed.

Fumbles / Interceptions:

- Fumbles on the initial snap from the center to quarterback, whether under center or in the shotgun, may be picked up and advanced by the quarterback ONLY.
- The play will be ruled dead at the point of contact if the ball is touched by any player other than the quarterback or kicked by the quarterback after the initial snap is dropped / fumbled.
- All other fumbles and dropped laterals are dead at the spot where the ball touches the ground.
- The offensive team retains possession unless the fumble occurs on 4th down. Interceptions may be advanced by the defense if intercepted.

Conduct: The League will not tolerate inappropriate behavior on the part of coaches, players or fans during games or practices. The Head Coach will be responsible for the actions of his assistant coaches, players and parents. Although coaches are allowed to discuss specific plays/calls with the officials, once the official has explained his call, the matter shall be dropped. Foul language, abuse, or any negative demonstration aimed at officials or anyone involved with the game will not be tolerated. Any coach or parent that is caught in this situation will be removed from the game immediately and suspended for the next game. Under no circumstances will the league allow a coach, player and/or a parent to accost any official.

Penalties: All TSSAA penalties apply. Listed below are a categorization of the most common penalties and their corresponding yardage.

Three Yard Penalties

- Illegal motion
- Encroachment (offsides)
- Delay of game - a team has 30 second from official's signal to put the ball in play
- Illegal substitution
- Failure for the offensive team to have four players on the line of scrimmage

Six Yard Penalties

- Holding
- Block in the back

Nine Yard Penalties

- Clipping
- Illegal participation
- Offensive pass interference (loss of down)
- Defensive pass interference *
- Intentional facemask *
- Personal foul *
- Unsportsmanlike conduct (second incidence is mandatory ejection from the game and suspension from next game)
- Roughing the passer *

* Automatic first down applies.

Fighting or kicking even without contact is grounds for ejection from the game.

Special Flag Rules (Both 5/6 & 7/8 Divisions):

- The area between the offensive line (actual line of scrimmage) and the defensive line is called the neutral zone. There will be a 3-yard neutral zone unless one of the two following situations exists: (1) the offensive team is inside the 15-yard line, or (2) it is fourth down with 1 yard or less to go. In these situations, the neutral zone will be reduced to 1-yard.
- Offensive team must have at least 3 players on line of scrimmage at all snaps.
- Flag Guarding (5-yds / spot foul)
- Diving as defined as intentional diving or jumping forward to advance the ball or avoid being de- flagged (5-yds / spot foul)
- Incidental Tackling which includes holding or grabbing of clothing to stop the ball carriers progress (8-yds / spot foul)
- Premature de-flagging (8-yds / spot foul)
- Run over contact (8-yds / spot foul)
- Ball carrier must run to avoid the defender. Deliberate RUN OVER by ball carrier is illegal. Ball carrier is not permitted to stiff-arm or flag guard.
- No illegal substitutions. Every player must report to the huddle before a play can be run.

- When the ball is snapped, ball must leave center's hands immediately. NO FUMBLEROOSKI PLAYS ARE ALLOWED.
- Off sides will immediately be called if a defensive player breaks the plane of the football (line of scrimmage) before the snap of the ball. A defensive player that “jumps” into the neutral zone (the 1- or 3-yard buffer) but returns to an onside position without breaking the line of scrimmage before the snap of the ball is not considered off sides.
- Defensive player who removes a flag from the ball carrier should immediately hold the flag above his head and drop the flag as close to the point of de-flagging as possible. Purposely de-flagging a player prior to his having the ball is illegal.
- Play is dead and the ball carrier is considered down when he is de-flagged regardless of the manner in which it occurs. The ball will be spotted where it was at the time of de-flagging.
- Defensive players rushing a passer should be coached to go for the passer’s flag. The defensive player cannot jump to bat down or block a pass which is leaving the passer’s hand behind the line of scrimmage. However, rushers are permitted to raise their arms in an effort to distract the quarterback as long as they DO NOT leave their feet (jump) AND avoid contact with the passer.
- Pass defenders must go for the ball (interception) or the receiver’s flag after reception. The defender cannot intentionally faceguard to interfere with reception.

Special Flag 5/6 Only Rules:

- An individual player can score a max of 3 times per game during regulation (combination of TD’s and Extra Points). Example: 1 TD/2 XP ; 2 TD/1 XP
- The penalty for scoring additional Touchdowns or Extra Points by a player that has reached his or her max is a loss of down and the ball will be returned to the original line of scrimmage.
- A player that has reached his or her max scoring limit per game is ineligible to run the ball while in the RedZone. RedZone will be designated as 15-yard line and in.
- Any player that has reached his or her max scoring limit per game running the ball can intentionally run out of bounds or intentionally go down anywhere inside the red zone, however the ball will automatically be spotted at the 15-yard line and be given a First Down. (unless the 5-yard line is the line to gain, at which point the ball would be marked at the 5-yard line and be given a First Down.)
- Interceptions returned for TD’s are not accounted for in the 3-score max rule.

- Overtime – Regulation scoring rules do not apply. Individuals maxed out in regulation will be eligible to score in OT.
- Tackling - A player flagged for tackling will be receive upwards of 2 warnings. If a player is flagged a 3rd time in any game, they will not be eligible on defense for the remainder of the game.

Special Flag 7/8 Only Rules:

- An individual player can score a max of 3 Touchdowns per game during regulation.
- Overtime – Regulation scoring rules do not apply. Individuals maxed out in regulation will be eligible to score in OT.
- Interceptions returned for TD's are not accounted for in the 3-score max rule.
- The penalty for scoring additional Touchdowns by a player that has reached his or her max is a loss of down and the ball will be returned to the original line of scrimmage.
- Tackling - A player flagged for tackling will be receive upwards of 2 warnings. If a player is flagged a 3rd time in any game, they will not be eligible on defense for the remainder of the game.

General Rules:

- The HEAD COACH is responsible for actions of players and spectators. Teams can be penalized for their actions.
- OFFICIAL'S CALLS ARE FINAL. NO PROTEST.
- Coaches and parents should address any problems to your director(s).
- Fumbles are live balls and can be advanced by any eligible player (under applicable weight limit).
- Interceptions can be advanced by the defense if by a weight eligible player.
- Taunting by players, coaches or fans WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.
- Consistent belligerent behavior by any player will lead to disqualification from game and possibly season.
- The home team for the first game of the day is responsible for setting up the markers and working the first down marker and chains.
- Visiting team of last game of the day puts away all equipment.
- Visiting team will call all coin flips.

- Home team is always on the side closest to the concession stand.
- The last two teams to play are responsible for picking up all the trash along their sidelines as well as on or around their bleachers. Failure to do so will result in a penalty for the Head Coach.
- All coaches are responsible for submitting background checks by the assigned deadline. Failure to comply will be unable to attend practice or coach in a game.
- All new coaches are required to be present or view video of the preseason coaching clinic.

Compliance Failure Penalties: Any coach, player or parent who fails to comply with these rules will be subject to the following sanctions:

1. First infraction will result in a verbal warning.
2. Second infraction will result in a mandatory 1 game suspension.
3. Third infraction will result in expulsion from the league.

All rules originate from TSSAA rules. Exceptions and clarifications are noted. Where not specifically addressed, TSSAA rules apply.