

Kids Gladiator Flag Rules

2026



Equipment:**Supplied:**

- Jersey with a number.
- A set of flags
- Age appropriate ball for games
- Shorts

Needed:

- Mouthguard mandatory
- Cleats preferred, running shoes are ok
- Receiver gloves (not necessary)
- No jewelry allowed while playing

Gameplay:

- Coin Toss to decide first possession. The other team will get a choice in the second half.
- 2 X 22 minutes halves with 5 total untimed plays at the end of each half
- 2 timeouts per team per game
- Possession starts on the 5 yard line
- A punt is considered a play in the final 5 plays of each half
- Defensive player must hand the offensive player back his/her flag
- Offense retrieves their own ball and takes it to the huddle
- 4 downs for 10 yards
- Rusher at 7 yards
- Once a player catches a pass or begins running with the ball their teammates are expected to freeze and remain motionless until the play is over. If a player runs alongside a teammate down the field, they will be flagged for illegal blocking. If a potential running play is developing, an offensive player can run their route until the runner crosses the LOS, doing so is not considered blocking.

Rusher:

- The Rusher must be the first one to cross the line of scrimmage. After he crosses anyone can cross. If undeclared, any player can rush the QB if they started farther than the 7 yard line.
- Rusher Immunity. He cannot be blocked if he is lined up 1 yard to the left or to the right of the snapper. If he lines up farther than 1 yard or directly in front of the snapper, the rusher will lose immunity and no penalty will be called for rusher interference. In the case of a double rush, only the declared rusher gets immunity. A good habit is to have your rusher put his hand up and declare before every play.
- If the rusher stutters or has to change direction, a penalty will be called. If the QB rolls out, the same applies, offensive players must get out of the way.
- The rusher must declare if the defense asks.
- A player who is fewer than 7 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped may not cross the line of scrimmage before one of the following occurs:
 - a) someone from seven yards away crosses first (rusher)
 - b) the ball is handed off or lateralled
 - c) a forward or backward pass is caught behind the line of scrimmage.
- Rusher is offside ONLY if he jumps before the snap AND crosses the line of scrimmage. If he returns behind the rushing bag he may then resume his rush and no penalty will be called.
- The Rusher can attempt to block the pass but at no time is he allowed to contact the QB, especially his arm. The rusher must have control of his body.

Ties:

- There are no tie breaks during the season.
- In the playoffs we do extra points in an ABBA format.

Formation:

- Offensive players must be lined up a minimum of 3 yards from the snapper.
- There is no minimum number of players that have to be on the line of scrimmage
- Motion is allowed as long as it is laterally or backwards, not towards the line of scrimmage.
- Only 1 player in motion at a time, exception if the play is changed. In this case, players must be set for at least 1 second.
- Defense must respect 1 yard neutral zone
- The defender in front of the snapper must be 3 yards back or 1 yard to the left or right.

Quarterback:

- Quarterback must be lined up minimum 5 yards behind the snapper (exception for the 5-6 division)

Spotting the ball:

- The spot of the ball is where the ball is not the flags.
- Reaching is allowed but not jumping or lunging.
- 1 feet inbounds for a catch to be completed
- On a force out/push from the defender, the offense will be awarded the catch
- On a bad snap, lateral or fumble, the ball will be spotted where it first lands. If it lands in the end zone it is a safety.

Punting:

- Offense has the choice to punt or go for it on 4th down.
- A punt from the offense will put the ball on the opposing team's 5 yard line.

Running:

- Anyone can run with the ball
- No running in the red zone, 5 yards from the goal line. 3 yard line for division 5-6
- No running on back to back plays
- A completed pass behind the line of scrimmage is considered a run if the player runs past the line of scrimmage
- Teams cannot run after an illegal run penalty. (ie cannot run on 3 consecutive plays)
- A player may leave the ground vertically or horizontally while spinning or juking. Any other leaping or diving forward is illegal.

Laterals:

- Unlimited handoffs and laterals in any direction (forward or backwards) are allowed behind the LOS. A forward pass is allowed from behind the LOS after laterals. However, once the ball carrier has crossed the LOS, or a forward pass is thrown beyond the LOS, laterals and handoffs are no longer permitted. The defensive team can intercept a lateral pass behind the LOS. Once past the LOS laterals are illegal and cannot be intercepted.

Scoring:

Touchdown (6 Points)

- Any part of the ball crossing the goal line is a touchdown.
- On any play, if the ball carrier is illegally interfered with in any way by the last defender between themselves and the goal line, and in the opinion of the official, it is CLEAR that a score would have been made had the interference not occurred, the score will be awarded. In the case of a dual foul, a score cannot be awarded, and the fouls would be balanced at the appropriate point.

Extra points (converts)

- 1 point from the 5 yard line
- 2 points from the 10 yard line

- Converts CAN be returned for 2 points regardless of how many points the offense was trying for.
- Once the team has expressed their option and the markers are set, they will be required to take a timeout if they wish to change their choice.
- The non-scoring team can concede a convert being attempted, and if they choose to do so, a 2 point convert will be awarded.
(Strategy for getting the ball back quickly and not wasting time with the extra point.)
- The scoring team may decline the extra point attempt for that same strategy.
- Red zone no running rules apply for converts.

Safety:

- A safety is 2 points
- On an interception, if the defense runs into their own end zone to run away to not get deflagged, that is a safety.
- If the player who intercepts the ball gets carried into the end zone by his momentum, it is a touchback and possession begins at the 5 yard line.
- If a fumble, missed snap or lateral pass lands in the offensive team's end zone, the ball is dead, and a safety is awarded.

Flag Pulling:

- A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball. A defensive player may not hold the ball carrier in any way to slow them down and pull their flag. Any player caught holding the flag belt, arm, body, jersey, shorts, pants etc will be assessed a holding penalty.
- If an offensive player loses a flag during the play, the defense only needs to touch him to end the play.
- A player may wear swag like a towel tucked into their pants. Any swag in the flag area will be considered an extra flag.
- Same for QB's removing their throwing hand's glove and tucking it into their shorts. The glove will count as an extra flag.

Flag Guarding:

- Ball carriers are not permitted to guard their flag in any way. Using hands, elbows, or the ball as shields for their flags. If the ball carrier stiff-arms, swats the opponent's hand, or performs any action that prevents a defender from deflaggering them, they will be penalized for flag guarding. Should the ball carrier place the ball near their flags, and have it knocked out of their hand by the defender, flag guarding is applied.
- Any jersey that hinders an attempt from a defender to deflag an opponent will be subject to a Flag Guard penalty. The officials shall try to be preventative in this matter, however if an advantage is gained, it shall be penalized as flag guarding.