

NFHS Girls Flag Football

Training Summary

(Based on the 2025–2026 NFHS Rule Book)

1. Game Basics (Rule 1 & 3)

Players

- 7 players per team on the field.

Field Dimensions

Standard football field with two end zones.

Recommended Dimensions

- **Playing Field:** 80 yards long × 40 yards wide
- **End Zones:** 10 yards deep

Field Markings

- Continuous line at 20 yards (sideline to sideline) marking the line-to-gain.
- **Team boxes marked on each sideline between the 20-yard lines.**
- Coaches' area: Minimum 2-yard belt between team box and sideline.
- **When the ball is live, the coaches' area becomes restricted.**

Game Administration

- Down marker/box supplied by the home team.
- Scoreboard should be operational

Note: Semi Finals & Championship game

(Refer to Diagram 1 in the NFHS rule book.)

2. Game Equipment (Rule 1 Section 3)

Game Ball

- Must meet NFHS Rule 1 Section 3 specifications.

Uniform & Protective Gear

Jerseys

- Numbered 0–99
- No duplicate numbers on the field during a down
- Must remain tucked in
- Hair cannot cover the jersey nameplate
- Visiting team responsible for avoiding similar colors

Pants / Shorts / Skirts

Must:

- Have no pockets
- Have no exposed drawstrings
- Have no belts or belt loops
- Be one solid color
- Clearly contrast with the flag belt color

Mouth Guard

- Required
- Must not include attachments unrelated to protecting the mouth or teeth

3. Flags

Each player must wear:

- Two flags
- Attached to a belt

- Popper-style flags
 - Flags must hang freely
 - Flags must be same design and color for all teammates
- Note:** Jerseys MUST be tucked into pants.

A player without two legal flags may not participate.

4. Illegal Equipment

Players may NOT wear:

- Hard casts
- Metal cleats
- Jewelry (No Tape)
- Towels or garments covering flags
- Hats or visors (bucket hats acceptable)
- Hair: Must be at or above name plate

5. Game Clock

Period	Time
1st Period	12 minutes
Break	1 minute
2nd Period	12 minutes
Halftime	10 minutes*
3rd Period	12 minutes
Break	1 minute
4th Period	12 minutes

***Halftime may be shortened by agreement of head coaches (minimum 5 minutes)**

Timeouts

- **2 timeouts per half**
- **1 minute each**

6. Clock Management

- Running clock may be used when a team leads by 20+ points
- Two-minute warning
- Occurs at first dead ball under 2:00 remaining in each half
- Referee notifies both teams

7. Downs

- Each half begins with a scrimmage play from the offense's 14-yard line
- Offense has 4 downs to reach the line-to-gain
- Typical line-to-gain = 20 yards

8. Starting the Play (Rule 4)

The ball is put into play by a legal snap.

Snapper requirements:

- Feet must be behind the neutral zone
- Only hands may extend past the ball
- Ball may be lifted for lateral rotation
- Ball may not rotate end-for-end

The snap must go to a player in the backfield.

9. Offensive Formation Rules

Before the snap:

- All offensive players must have been momentarily 5 yards inbounds
- The player receiving the snap must be at least 2 yards behind the snapper

10. Pre-Snap Fouls

False Start

Offensive movement simulating the start of the play.

Encroachment / Offside

Defensive player enters neutral zone before snap. **(play is dead, no free play by offense).**

11. Live Ball / Dead Ball (Rule 4)

The ball becomes dead immediately when:

- Ball carrier's flag is pulled
- Runner goes out of bounds
- Knee or body touches ground
- Forward pass hits ground
- Backwards pass or snap hits the ground
- Punt strikes or is muffed by a player and hits the ground
- Score occurs

12. Running Plays (Rules 7 & 9)

Runner is down when their flag is pulled.

Flag Guarding

Occurs when a runner:

- Extends arms to ward off defender

- Uses hands/arms/body to prevent flag pull
- Spins while covering the flag
- Dives to avoid a flag pull.

Penalty:

10 yards from spot of foul

13. Passing Plays (Rule 7)

- Forward pass must be thrown from behind the line of scrimmage
- Only one forward pass per play
- Passer must have both feet behind the neutral zone

Pass Interference: Occurs when a player beyond the neutral zone interferes with an opponent's opportunity to catch the ball.

Examples:

- Early contact
- Playing through receiver
- Restricting ability to catch

14. Illegal Use of Hands

Offensive Players

May not:

- Interlock arms with teammates
- Hold or restrain opponents

Defensive Players

May not:

- Initiate contact with opponents
- Hold or restrain opponents
- Initiate contact with eligible receivers
- Remove flags from a player without the ball

Exceptions

- Player who has been faked to
- Player attempting to secure a muffed pass or airborne fumble

15. Roughing the Passer

Defenders must:

- Attempt to pull the passer's flag
- Avoid contact with arm or head
- Avoid charging the passer
- Not bat the ball from the passer's hand

16. Blocking Rules (Rule 9)

Traditional blocking is NOT allowed.

Only screen blocking is legal.

Legal Screen Block

- Player assumes legal position

- Moves to maintain position
- No contact initiated
- Arms and hands cannot be extended

17. Illegal Kicking & Batting

Players may not:

- Kick the ball except during a scrimmage kick
- Bat a loose ball
- Bat a ball in player possession

Players may bat a pass in flight.

18. Scoring (Rule 8)

Score Type	Points
Touchdown	6
Try (3-yard line)	1
Try (10-yard line)	2
Safety	2

A score occurs when the ball breaks the plane of the goal line.

19. Turnovers

Possession changes when:

- **Pass is intercepted**
- **Offense fails to reach line-to-gain**

If offense fumbles, the ball is dead at the spot of the fumble.

20. After Safety

The scoring team will put the ball in play 1st & 10 from its own 30-yard line

21. Punting Rules

A punt is a scrimmage kick where the ball is dropped and kicked before touching the ground.

Rules:

- Punt must be declared before the snap
- Receiving team must have time to substitute
- If declared, the team must punt

A team may change its decision after:

- Timeout
- Official timeout
- End of period
- Penalty enforcement

The kick must occur at least 2 yards behind the neutral zone.

Referee Quick Reference – Penalties

Pre-Snap Penalties

Foul	Penalty
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False Start	5 yards
Offside	5 yards
Encroachment	5 yards
Illegal Formation	5 yards
Delay of Game	5 yards

Running Play Penalties

Foul	Penalty
Flag Guarding	10 yards (spot foul)
Holding	10 yards
Illegal Use of Hands	10 yards
Illegal Contact	10 yards
Removing Flag (Non-Runner)	