



# PIC SIX SPORTS

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## FLAG FOOTBALL PENALTIES

Reference this chart when you need to make sense of the different flag football penalties and get a clear understanding of what they mean.

When the referee blows the whistle or throws a flag on the ground during the play, they're typically indicating that a penalty has occurred. The referee calls all flag football penalties and also determines judgment calls, such as contact resulting from normal run of play. To keep the game moving accordingly, players can't question judgement calls. Only the team captain or the head coach may inquire about flag football rule clarifications and interpretations.

Unlike sports—like basketball—where individual players accumulate infractions, flag football penalties affect the team as a whole, typically resulting in a loss or gain of yardage and downs. That's why it's important for both coaches and players to fully understand how each flag football penalty impacts the team.

But we realize that learning flag football penalties and terms can get a bit overwhelming. To easily make sense of it all, we've broken them down into categories and provided a description for each.

## Defensive spot fouls

All flag football penalties are assessed from the line of scrimmage, except for spot fouls. Spot fouls are penalties that are assessed from the spot on the field where the foul occurred.

Here are the flag football penalties categorized as defensive spot fouls:

Type	Description	Yardage
Defensive pass interference	The player significantly hinders an eligible receiver's opportunity to catch the ball	Automatic first down
Holding	The player restrains another player who is not in possession of the ball	+5 yards and automatic first down
Stripping	A player smacks or grabs the football out of the ball-carrier's possession	+10 yards and automatic first down

## Offensive spot fouls

Offensive spot fouls are also assessed from the spot on the field where the foul occurred. All of these flag football penalties result in a loss of down. But any loss of down on the third down results in a turnover, with the other team taking possession. Here are flag football penalties categorized as offensive spot fouls:

Type	Description	Yardage
Screening, blocking or running with the ball	The player uses physical attempts to gain yardage by obstructing the path of their opponent	-10 yards and loss of down
Charging	The player challenges their opponent for space without using their arms or elbows	-10 yards and loss of down
Flag guarding	The ball-carrier intentionally obstructs the defender's access to their flag	-10 yards and loss of down

## Defensive flag football penalties

You'll find that many defensive flag football penalties are behavior-oriented and can take on several definitions. Unsportsmanlike conduct, for example, can include any physical acts, like intentional tackling, elbows, or cheap shots, as well as verbal, such as confrontational language. Referees can also dish out a flag football penalty to fans who aren't keeping the field safe and kid friendly. Bottom line: these flag football penalties are designed to teach youth players the importance of respect and good sportsmanship.

Type	Description	Yardage
Unnecessary roughness	Using methods beyond what is necessary to pull the flag off the opponent	+10 yards and automatic first down
Unsportsmanlike conduct	Examples include excessive celebration, using abusive language, punching or kicking an opponent	+10 yards and automatic first down
Offside	A player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped	+5 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Illegal rush	The rusher is not lined up at least seven yards off the line of scrimmage	+5 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Illegal flag pull	A player pulls the flag off an opponent before they have full possession of the ball	+5 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Roughing the passer	A player makes contact with the passer after they've thrown a forward pass	+5 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Taunting	A type of unsportsmanlike conduct where the player purposely creates ill will between teams	+5 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down

## Offensive flag football penalties

Similar to defensive flag football penalties, offensive flag football penalties include infractions for unsportsmanlike behavior, whether it's physical or verbal. On offense, there are also penalties for improper movements on the line of scrimmage, such as moving before the play starts or delaying the game. For example, each time the ball is spotted, a team has 25 seconds to snap the ball. Delay-of-games penalties are enforced after one warning. Here's a list of offensive flag football penalties:

Type	Description	Yardage
Unnecessary roughness	Using methods beyond what is necessary to pull the flag off the opponent	-10 yards and loss of down
Unsportsmanlike conduct	Examples include excessive celebration, using abusive language, punching or kicking an opponent	-10 yards and loss of down
Offside/false start	A player charges or moves in a way that indicates the start of the play before the ball is snapped	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal forward pass	A player throws the ball forward once they are past the line of scrimmage	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Pass interference	The eligible receiver significantly hinders the defensive player's opportunity to intercept the ball	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal motion	Players shifting and not coming to a complete stop before the ball is snapped	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Delay of game	Team fails to snap the ball and put it in play	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Impeding the rusher	The rusher's path or line is occupied by a moving offensive player	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal procedure	A technical rules violation, such as illegal formation	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down