

## Bloomington Knockers Flag Football League Rules (as of 8/14/2025)

The purpose of the Bloomington Knockers Youth Flag Football League is to introduce the sport of football to young athletes, provide them with quality coaches, and offer a positive experience. We aim to offer both an introductory transition to Tackle Football as they learn as well as an alternative if they prefer flag. At the K/1 level all athletes should get a chance to run the ball each game. This generally continues at the 2/3rd level knowing there may be some limited variation. At 4<sup>th</sup> / 5<sup>th</sup> it is at coach discretion with the emphasis on a good experience for all athletes, so they have a desire to return. The formations and plays should teach principles that can carry over to tackle football as opposed to “gimmicks” that may be successful in flag but are not practical skills in traditional football.

### Divisions

- Shamrock: K/1st Grade (Beginner rules – maximum fun and skill introduction)
  - Banshee: 2nd/3rd Grade (Intermediate rules – skill development focus)
  - Celtic: 4th/5th Grade (Advanced youth rules – more strategy and pace)
  - TBD 6 / 7th Grade: (Competitive rules – TBA in upcoming season as division will be introduced)
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### 1. Field Setup

- Field Length: 35-40 yards from goal line to goal line (adjustable based on space).
  - End Zones: 5 yards deep at each end.
  - Field Width: 30–35 yards (adjustable based on space).
  - First Down Markers: Midfield line only – one first down per drive possible.
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### 2. Game Length

- Game Time: One 50-minute running clock with no halftime or stoppage. Coaches' discretion for water break. No overtime.
  - Play Clock: 30 seconds from spot only when within 5 minutes of end of game.
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### 3. Coaches

- Officials: Coaches will serve as officials. One from each team.
  - Field Coach: Coaches may be on the field to call play and line up athletes (whiteboard is ok) and then must retreat to 10 yards back for offensive coach or 15 yards for defensive coach. Must not interfere with the direction of play.
    - K/1st: 2 coaches allowed on field per team on both offense and defense. Verbal coaching allowed during play.
    - 2nd/3rd: 1 coach on offense and 1 coach on defense.
    - 4th/5th: 1 coach on offense to call play. No coach on defense. May not provide verbal coaching during the play. Sideline coach can provide verbal coaching during the play.
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### 4. Starting & Possession

- Team with lower record starts with ball or coin toss winner if records are tied.
  - No kickoffs – ball starts on the 5-yard line after scores or at the start of each half.
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### 5. Offense

- First Downs: 4 plays to achieve First Down by crossing midfield. Team is awarded 3 more downs to score once they cross midfield.
- Play Start/End: Ball must be snapped from the ground. Does not need to be between legs. The ball is dead when it hits the ground, the offensive player's flag is pulled from their belt, the ball-carrier steps out of bounds, or the ball-carrier's body—outside of their hands or feet—touches the ground. Offense retains possession on fumbles.
- Inside the 5-yard line:
  - K/1st: may run the ball
  - 2nd/3rd: must pass unless it is the last down.
  - 4th/5th: must pass
- Quarterback Run:
  - K/1st: QB may run at any time.

- 2nd/3rd: QB may not run; may catch pass if handoff or pitch first.
  - 4th/5th: QB may run only if rushed; may catch pass if handoff or pitch first.
  - Blocking: Screen blocking allowed but cannot “push” by extending hands into the defender or “drive” by pushing them with their body while driving the legs.
  - Fumbles: Play is dead and offense retains possession
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## 6. Defense

- Alignment: Must start at least 5 yards back from line of scrimmage. Exception if within 5 yards of goal line the defense may line up on the goal line.
    - K/1<sup>st</sup>: No rushing in front of line until after a handoff made or pass thrown.
    - 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup>: No rushing in front of line until after a handoff made or pass thrown.
    - 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup>: Can rush after three (3) “one-thousand” count by coach.
  - Contact: No tackling, holding, or physical blocking by extending arms or driving.
  - Flag Pull: Player must grab flag belt – no stripping ball from carrier’s hands.
  - Interceptions: May be returned for yardage; possession changes at spot.
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## 7. Scoring

- Touchdown: 6 points, no PAT
  - Safety: 2 points, ball given to scoring team at their 5-yard line.
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## 8. Penalties

- Offside / False Start: 5 yards / half the distance.
  - Flag Guarding: 5 yards from spot & loss of down.
  - Defensive Holding/Pass Interference: Automatic first down at spot of foul.
  - Offensive Pass Interference: Return to line of scrimmage. Loss of down.
  - Delay of Game: 5 yards.
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## 10. Sportsmanship

- No taunting, swearing, or excessive celebration.
- First unsportsmanlike = warning, second = ejection.
- Coaches responsible for players and sideline conduct.

## 11. Number of players

- Coaches' discretion for number of players on both sides as long as it is even. This allows coaches to maximize playing time if there are more or fewer athletes. The default is 8 v. 8 with the offense allowed 4 eligible receivers that must line up behind the line of scrimmage, 1 quarterback, and 3 ineligible linemen.
  - For any lower number, the same number of eligible receivers are allowed and one lineman may be removed down to a total of 6 total players.
  - For a higher number, teams may add another eligible receiver on the line outside of the guard (such as a "tight end" or "split end")

Players	Eligible Receivers	Ineligible Linemen
6	4 – lined up behind line of scrimmage	1 (Center)
7	4 – lined up behind line of scrimmage	2
8	4 – lined up behind line of scrimmage	3
9	5 – lined up behind line of scrimmage	3
10	6 – lined up behind line of scrimmage	3

