



Charlotte Turkey Bowl

Rules of the Game

(Updated 11/19/19)

The Charlotte Turkey Bowl is a Men's Flag Football Tournament consisting of Group Play where some or all teams from each group advance to a single-elimination playoff to determine the overall champion (group play format depends on number of teams in each division).

Flag Football is not tackle football or "power" football. Rather than trying to defeat or crush the opponent, teams should strive together to challenge each other by using speed, agility, quickness, and appropriate deception. This is a "no contact" event meaning both offensive and defensive players should try to avoid making **intentional contact** with an opposing player at any time.

Basic Information

- Number of Players: 5v5 at all times (cannot play with less than 5 on the field)
- Field Size: 70yds X 30yds (goal line to goal line = 60yds, end zones = 5yds)
- Football Size: Youth or Regulation (offensive team decides, can use either size)
- Men Only Ages 15+ (no women allowed)

Divisions

- Competitive (Division 1): After completion of group play, multiple tournaments will be setup based on each team's performance; must be at least 15 years old to participate
- Armchair QB (Division 2): Primarily for "older" players who spend more time watching sports than playing sports; High School & College Aged Students not eligible

NOTE: A "strong" Armchair QB team may get moved to one of the Competitive Division playoff brackets and/or a "weak" Competitive team may get moved to one of the Armchair QB brackets.

Punting & Kicking

No punting or kickoffs. The offensive team will always start with the ball on their own five (5) yard line except after an interception in which case the ball should be spotted at the location of the flag pull. After an interception, Pass Only Zone and First Down rules apply if applicable (just need to get to midfield regardless of where you start).

First Downs & Touchdowns

When the offensive team starts with the ball on their side of the field (anywhere), they will have four (4) downs to get across midfield to gain a first down. Once across midfield (anywhere), they will have four (4) downs to score -- no more first downs except via penalty. If the offensive team starts with the ball already across midfield after an interception, they will have four (4) downs to score (unable to get a first down except via penalty).

Blocking & Screening

No form of blocking, screening, shielding, or running with the ball carrier is allowed. This is a tricky rule that causes much confusion. Neither offensive nor defensive players are permitted to initiate contact with opposing players. Offensive players may complete their "route" and act as decoys to draw the attention of the defense but should not be instructed to block in any form for the ball carrier.

Play Clock & Substitutions

- Once the line referee determines the spot of the ball, the offensive team will have **thirty seconds (30)** to snap the ball. Failure to snap the ball within the allotted time will result in a loss of down.
- The line referee will indicate with **the raise of one hand** that the play clock has started and the offense team is free to snap the ball
- The ball must be placed within five (5) yards of the "center of the field" along the line of scrimmage. Think somewhere between the hash marks on a regular football field.
- "Free Substitution" is allowed between plays but the offense does not have to wait on a defensive substitution as long as the referee has given the signal that the offensive team is free to snap the ball

Spotting the Ball

- The ball is spotted where the ball is located at the time of the flag pull which means players are able to "stretch" the ball across the first down line or goal line. However, if an offensive player with the ball leaves his feet (dives forward), the ball will be spotted at the point he jumped, not where the ball ends up. In short, players can reach the ball out in front of them to gain an extra yard or two but cannot jump or dive forward.
- The offensive team can set the cone and "spot the ball" at the location the line referee designates but must wait to snap the ball until the line referee gives the signal (useful if running a hurry up offense)
- The ball must be placed within five (5) yards of the "center of the field" along the line of scrimmage. Think somewhere between the hash marks on a regular football field.

Center/QB Exchange

There must be a Center/QB exchange where the QB lines up behind the Center (regular snap or shotgun). The first player to receive the ball from the Center is considered the QB (no direct snap to a designated Running Back). The Center is permitted to snap the ball in any appropriate manner (between legs, from the side, etc.). If there is a fumble on the exchange, play will be ruled dead immediately, down counts, and ball will be placed at the spot where the football hit the ground. If the fumble occurs in the end zone, it will be ruled as a safety.

Passing

- The QB has a six (6) second pass clock. If the QB is not able to throw the ball in time, the result will be a loss of down and the ball will be spotted at the original line of scrimmage.
- Once the QB gives the ball up the pass clock no longer applies.
- As soon as a defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage (eligible or ineligible) the pass clock no longer applies.
- The QB can only run the ball after a defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage (eligible or ineligible).

Receiving

- All players are eligible to receive a pass – including center and QB. The QB can only receive a pass from another player (cannot throw a pass to himself).
- Players must have at least one foot/hip/knee/shin in bounds and complete control of the ball when making a catch
- If an offensive player unintentionally runs out of bounds he must regain both feet in bounds before touching the pass to become an eligible receiver. If it is intentional then the catch will be ruled an incomplete pass.
- Only one player is allowed to be in motion at a time (motion must be lateral to the line of scrimmage).

Handoffs

- The Center is eligible to receive an initial handoff provided there is a clear exchange between the Quarterback and the Center.
- The QB is not eligible to receive an immediate "return" or direct handoff meaning the read-option play with the QB running the ball is not permitted (can still fake the handoff and pass). In order for the QB to regain possession of the ball, the ball must clearly be possessed by another player who can then pitch the ball backward or throw the ball forward to the QB.
- Handoffs, passes, laterals, and pitches of any kind behind the line of scrimmage are allowed. Laterals beyond the line of scrimmage are allowed.
- Once the ball has been handed off from the QB to another player, then all defensive players are eligible to cross the line of scrimmage.

When Running with the Ball

- Runners are not allowed to stiff-arm, run over defenders, flag guard, or use any other means to physically keep the defender from attempting to pull the flag belt (penalty will be assessed).
- Ball carriers are permitted to spin but **cannot jump forward** (both feet in the air) to avoid a defender. However, offensive players are permitted to jump when attempting to catch a pass and backwards/sideways to avoid defenders.
- If a player is in possession of the ball contacts the ground with anything other than the "hand not carrying the ball" the player will be ruled down and the play is dead regardless of whether the flag has been pulled or not

Fumbles

Any time the ball is fumbled and touches the ground after being in a player's possession it is considered down and the play is dead. The team that fumbled retains possession at the spot where the football hit the ground. If there is a fumble on the Center/QB exchange, play will be ruled dead immediately, down counts, and ball will be placed at the spot where the football hit the ground. If a fumble occurs in the end zone, it will be ruled as a safety.

Defensive & Flag Pulling Rules

- Anything hanging from the "belt" of a player is considered a flag and can be pulled for a legal tackle (flag belt, towel, shirt, etc.).
- If the flags of the ball carrier or any other player fall off during a play, then the "one-hand touch" rule applies to only the player(s) without flags. Play continues until the whistle is blown.
- Defensive players are permitted to jump and dive (have both feet in the air) when attempting to pull an opposing player's flag belt.
- Defensive players are permitted to jump when attempting to break up or intercept a pass.
- Defenders are not allowed to attempt to strip or take the ball out of the hands of a player who has possession (penalty will be assessed).

Blitzing/Rushing the Quarterback

- Rushing the quarterback will be allowed on all downs.
- If no defensive player rushes the quarterback, the six (6) second pass clock applies.
- Any defensive players behind the **designated rush line** when the ball is snapped will be eligible to rush the quarterback. The rush line will be marked by one of the referees and will either be:
 - Ten (10) yards from the line of scrimmage
 - Back of end zone inside of the five (5) yard line

- As soon as any defensive player intentionally or unintentionally steps across the line of scrimmage with any part of their body, the quarterback is eligible to run the ball and the six (6) second pass clock no longer applies. The quarterback cannot run on a "fake" rush or no rush. If an ineligible defensive player comes across the line of scrimmage, the offense will have the option to either accept or decline the *Illegal Rush* penalty.
- The quarterback can throw a legal forward pass while on the run as long as he/she releases the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- Offensive players cannot purposely impede/block any defensive player attempting to rush. However, offensive players are permitted to "run their route" which may create an obstacle for rushers to maneuver around.
- Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however, NO contact can be made with the quarterback in any way. Blocking the pass or attempting to block the pass and then making contact with the passer will result in a roughing the passer penalty.

Pass Only Zones

When the offensive team is within ten (10) yards of getting a first down or scoring a touchdown, the following rules apply:

- No handoffs or backward pitches/passes are allowed behind the line of scrimmage
- There must be a clear forward toss, forward pass, or forward shovel pass **across the line of scrimmage**
- The first person to gain possession of the ball on the snap will be considered the QB and the only person eligible to throw the required forward pass (QB can run if blitzed)
- Defense is allowed to BLITZ; if any eligible or ineligible defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage, **the pass only rules above are no longer valid** (QB is eligible to run, a handoff can take place, a backward pass can be thrown, etc.)

Group Play Game Duration & Timing

- 40-Minute game with running clock
- No halftime, no clock stoppages, no timeouts

Group Play Scoring

One (1) point for each touchdown scored. No extra point attempts. Games can end in a tie. In the event of a safety, the defensive team will be awarded no points but will gain possession of the ball five (5) yards past midfield in the opponent's territory.

Playoff Game Duration & Timing

- Two (2) 20-Minute halves with running clock unless otherwise noted below
- Clock will stop on all extra point attempts and then start back up as soon as the ball is spotted for the next offensive play (won't wait until ball is snapped)
- A **regulation clock** will be used in the final two (2) minutes of the second half. This means the clock will stop at the following times: incomplete pass, player runs out of bounds, first down, extra point attempts, penalties, change of possession
- Each team will have one (1) "stop the clock" timeout per half during all playoff games that can be used at any time.

Playoff Scoring

- Six (6) points for each touchdown scored.
- After a touchdown is scored, the offensive team will select one of the following extra point conversions to attempt (clock stops):
 - a) 1-Point Conversion – from the five (5) yard line, Pass Only rules apply
 - b) 2-Point Conversion – from the twelve (12) yard line
 - c) DEFENSIVE NOTE: The defensive team can score on an extra point (if “pick six” then same amount of points awarded that the offensive team was attempting)
- In the event of a safety, the defense will be awarded two (2) points and possession of the ball back on their own five (5) yard line.

Overtime

There will be no overtime periods during Group Play (games can end in a tie). The following rules will apply during the Single-Elimination Playoff.

1. First Overtime
 - a. Each team will have one (1) play
 - b. Coin Flip winner decides whether to be on offense or defense first
 - c. Offensive team selects to go for either a 1-Point conversion (from 5-yard line) or a 2-Point conversion (from 12-yard line)
2. Second+ Overtime
 - a. Each team will have one (1) play
 - b. Coin Flip winner decides whether to be on offense or defense first
 - c. Both offensive teams must go for a 2-Point conversion

Playoff Seedings

All teams will participate in the playoffs which will begin after the Halftime Show. Divisions with more than 8 teams will be separated into multiple stand-alone brackets based on performance in the morning group play games. Each playoff bracket will consist of 4-8 teams and the winner of each bracket will be considered a Turkey Bowl Champion (winners of each bracket do not play each other). Scouts will be evaluating teams during the morning group play games to help determine the best competitive breakdown for the playoff brackets.

NOTE: A "strong" Armchair QB team may get moved to one of the Competitive Division playoff brackets and/or a "weak" Competitive team may get moved to one of the Armchair QB brackets.

Penalties

Teams may **decline all "live ball" penalties** (meaning the result of the play stands). Dead ball penalties must be accepted. Games cannot end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it. Offsetting penalties result in replay of down.

All Players

1. **UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT, TAUNTING, USE OF INAPPROPRIATE LANGUAGE**
 - a. First Infraction of the Day = Ten (10) yard penalty
 - b. Second Infraction of the Day = Ten (10) yard penalty & disqualified for remainder of game
 - c. Third Infraction of the Day = Ten (10) yard penalty & disqualified for remainder of the day

Offensive

1. *FALSE START* (line up beyond or move across the line of scrimmage before the snap) --- play is ruled dead immediately, loss of five (5) yards, replay of down
2. *ILLEGAL MOTION* (more than one person moving, player doesn't get set) --- play is live, loss of five (5) yards, replay of down
3. *OFFENSIVE PASS INTERFERENCE* --- loss of down & loss of five (5) yards from where the play began
4. *ILLEGAL RUN* (quarterback crosses line of scrimmage without being rushed) --- loss of down, ball spotted where the play began (no yardage gain)
5. *ILLEGAL CONTACT* (blocking, bumping, holding, illegal pick, etc.) --- if happens before ball crosses the line of scrimmage then loss of down with the ball being spotted where the play began; if happens after ball crosses the line of scrimmage then loss of down and ball spotted ten (10) yards back from where the penalty occurred
6. *FLAG GUARDING* --- loss of down, ball spotted five (5) yards back from spot of the penalty
7. *DELAY OF GAME* --- loss of down, ball spotted where the play began
8. *PASS CLOCK VIOLATION* --- loss of down, ball spotted where the play began
9. *ILLEGAL FORWARD LATERAL* --- loss of down, ball spotted at the point the forward lateral occurred.
10. *ILLEGAL FORWARD PASS* --- loss of down, ball spotted where the play began; foot must cross line completely (no penalty if even with the line of scrimmage marker)
11. *ILLEGAL SUBSTITUTION (too many players on the field)* --- five (5) yard penalty, replay down

**NOTE: If an offensive penalty occurs on a play that begins in the Pass Only Zone and results in the offensive team being pushed back out of the Pass Only Zone, the Pass Only Zone rules still apply until the offensive team scores or achieves a first down*

Defensive

1. *ILLEGAL RUSH* --- gain of five (5) yard, replay of down
2. *DEFENSIVE PASS INTERFERENCE* --- automatic first down with ball spotted at the point where the penalty occurred.
3. *ILLEGAL CONTACT* (blocking, holding, pushing a player out of bounds) --- automatic first down with ball spotted where the penalty occurred & gain of ten (10) yards
4. *ILLEGAL FLAG PULL* (before the receiver has the ball) --- automatic first down with ball spotted at the point where the penalty occurred & gain of ten (10) yards
5. *ILLEGAL STRIP OF THE BALL* (defensive player tries to strip the ball from the ball carrier) --- automatic first down with ball spotted at the point where the penalty occurred & gain of ten (10) yards from the spot of the penalty
6. *ROUGHING THE PASSER* results in automatic first down PLUS a gain of ten (10) yards from the spot where the play began
7. *ILLEGAL SUBSTITUTION (too many players on the field)* --- five (5) yard penalty, replay down

NOTE: Any defensive penalty that **occurs in the end zone results in an automatic first down and the ball spotted on the one (1) yard line.*