

Flag Football Study Sheet

History and Fun Facts

When William Ebb Ellis, a student at Rugby School in England, broke all rules in 1823 and picked up the soccer ball and ran with it, British football was about to change from a form of the ancient Greek game known as *harpaston* to a modernized British version. Later in the 1800s, British football eventually became two games: rugby and soccer (soccer is known as *football* outside of the United States). In America, a variety of rough games were played on college campuses, but it wasn't until after the Civil War when colleges, led by Princeton, began drawing up some basic rules and American football was developed and patented that football as we know it in America began to take shape.

In the United States, applying the name *football* to the game probably more refers to the unusual shape of the ball than using the feet to play the ball. Clearly, American football is more a game of throwing and catching than fielding the ball from a kick.

Princeton and Yale played the first collegiate football game in 1879. Much of what makes American football distinctive can be attributed to Walter Camp, a Yale player, coach, and athletic director who was central to the evolution of the rules and rulebooks from the late 1880s until his death in 1925. Professional football had its start with the National Football League (NFL) in 1920.

Skills

- Grip the football by putting the forefinger on the seam and three fingers on the laces so there is a V between the forefinger and the thumb.
- Pass so the ball reaches receivers in the numbers (where jersey numbers would be on the chest) as they arrive where they are anticipated to go. Avoid throwing to a stationary player.
- Catch with eyes on the ball so that you see it into your hands. For high passes, catch with palms open and fingers up, watching the tip of the ball into the window between your forefingers and thumbs. For low passes, do the same with fingers down. Run pass patterns without looking for the ball until you have made the cut.
 - Hook (or hitch) pattern—The receiver runs forward and then turns in an almost about-face to come back to the ball.
 - Square in—The receiver lines up on the outside of the line, runs downfield, and cuts toward the inside of the field to run in front of the quarterback.
 - Square out—The receiver lines up near the quarterback, runs straight ahead, and cuts to continue movement toward the sideline of the field.
 - Slant—After running forward about 4 yards (3.5 meters), the receiver cuts in a diagonal, running at a 45° angle from the line of scrimmage.
 - Post—The receiver runs toward the goalpost.

Rules

- Games start with a throw-off or punt from a line delineated by your ground rules. If the ball bounces into the end zone, it comes out to the equivalent of the 20-yard (18-meter) line. If it bounces in and then goes out on the sideline, it is put in play in line with where it went out.
- Players must line up on the line of scrimmage behind the ball on their own side of the field before each new play. If they are offside, the play is repeated and their team suffers a loss of 5 yards (4.5 meters).
- Ball carriers can only be stopped by pulling one of their flags. If the flags are not flying, the team loses a down, 5 yards (4.5 meters), and the play is called back. Intentional physi

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- cal contact will result in the loss of a down, possible ejection from the game, and either a 15-yard (14 meter) penalty if committed by the offense or halfway to the goal line if committed by the defense.
- There can be no forward passes in front of the line of scrimmage.
- The defensive team cannot cross the line of scrimmage until one of the following happens: the count has reached 7 Mississippi ("1 Mississippi, 2 Mississippi, 3 Mississippi . . .") or the quarterback is no longer in possession of the ball. Once the ball is off the ground, the count to 7 Mississippi begins.