



## Official Lancaster Alive Flag Football Rules

**1. Player Eligibility:** All players MUST sign the League's Liability Waiver to play in any Lancaster Alive Athletics (LAA) league. Failure or refusal to sign LAA liability waiver form shall result in the player not being allowed to participate in the league. Any player found to be playing without signing the liability waiver shall be immediately suspended from that game and may only return to play upon signing the liability waiver following that game. There are NO exceptions for failure to agree to waive liability. Tee shirts will not be given to those that have not signed the waiver, and a player is absolutely not allowed on the field without a LAA tee shirt.

All players must be 18 years of age or older on or before the first game of the season - picture ID's must be produced upon request of referee or league official. Failure to produce accurate picture ID upon request shall result in removal of player from game play until such time as proof of age/identity can be verified.

To be eligible for playoffs, all players must have participated in a minimum of three week's games.

**2. Team Roster:** Each team shall be composed of at least a 12 person roster. A team may have less than 12 people, but the minimum team fee is \$540 or \$45 per player – whichever is GREATER. Players may register individually for \$45 or with a team. Individuals will be given to the team with the least amount of players first. There is no maximum number of players allowed on a team roster. All players must be listed on the roster and sign the LAA waiver to participate. Players may be added at any time until the final tee shirt order date. After that time, until the third week of play, a team must drop a player before it may add a player. The dropped player must provide his/her tee shirt to the added player.

After the third week of play, team rosters are frozen. Teams must provide an updated roster to the Commissioner at the end of the third week. See the Commissioner for additional roster forms.

A team can field no more than 8 players at a time. At least 3 of the players on the field must be women. A team must have at least 6 players, and at least 2 women, present at game time to avoid a forfeit.

A team may play with a full team of 8 if its opponent is short players.

**3. Starting the Game:** Games are to be started no later than the 10 minutes after the posted game time. Arrive early and get warmed up. Game warm-up is at the discretion of both teams as long as the game begins as soon as each team has a minimum number of players. A seven point penalty will be assessed by the referee for each +5 minutes a team causes the game to be started late. At 10 minutes past posted game start time a forfeit shall be called.

Initial receiving team is determined by a coin flip called by the “Home” team, with team winning the toss determining preference of ball or side. Sides will alternate at halftime. Time will be started at five minutes after official game time and will run regardless of whether game started on time.

**4. Forfeits:** All around bad news and offending teams shall be noodle-whipped the following week. A game forfeit will automatically result in a loss to the forfeiting team. Any team that forfeits their game without 24 hour prior notice will be billed for the referees for the game. The team will not be allowed to play again until those fees are paid to LAA.

**5. Equipment:** Each team must provide a football that their team will use while they are on offense. LAA shall supply the flags, pylons marking yardage markers, and pucks marking the line of scrimmage and neutral zone. Sunglasses are prohibited unless they are prescription.

The field is 80 yards x 40 yards. It is divided into four 20-yard zones. Lines and/or cone marker indicate out of bounds. Referees will make judgment calls for the spot of the ball. Don’t argue with the refs, it just makes you look pathetic.

Each player must wear a flag belt (provided by LAA).

Each player must wear pants or shorts without any belts, belt loops, pockets, or exposed drawstrings. Players must wear shoes. Players may wear rubber cleats, but no metal cleats will be allowed and are grounds for ejection.

Teams will wear jerseys of opposing colors. Your league fees do NOT include a t-shirt. LAA negotiated with a sponsor bar for them to purchase league issued jerseys. Upon registration your captain can request your team color. The color assigned to you will be your team color for the entire of the season. The jerseys will also get you discounts at the sponsoring bar after the game. Please patronize the sponsor bar after the game, their sponsorship makes the jerseys and the league possible.

**6. The Clock:** A game will consist of two halves. Each half will last 20 minutes. Halftime is 5 minutes. The clock will run during both halves but will stop for time outs or a serious injury. If an injury occurs, the player must leave the field for one down. The ref will maintain the clock. The ref will notify teams when there are two minutes remaining in each half.

If time expires while the ball is in play, the referee may not call time until the down is complete. If a touchdown occurs after time has expired, the team shall be allowed to attempt an extra point conversion. If an accepted foul by the defense occurs, the offense may choose to extend the period by one down.

Each team will have two one-minute time outs per game.

Unless a team is winning by 17 or more points, NFL clock rules will apply during the final two minutes of the second half. The clock will stop when the following events occur:

- a. An incomplete pass.
- b. An offensive player goes out of bounds before a defensive player touches them.
- c. Either team scores. The clock will restart upon the snap after the PAT attempt.
- d. Possession changes.
- e. A penalty must be marked off.
- f. A time out is called.

The clock will continue to run on first downs and completed passes inbounds.

If a team is winning by 17 or more points, the clock will continue to run, and no team may call a time out.

The Offensive team has 30 seconds to snap the ball once the line of scrimmage has been marked and/or when ball is back in huddle (whichever is first). This time will be kept by the referee and will only be announced if time has elapsed. A penalty of five yards will be assessed for not getting plays off in time. Play is called dead for Delay of Game. If Defense is Offsides, the play continues. The offense can then determine to accept or decline the penalty. Following an extra point attempt, the scoring team has one minute to line up on defense. After the one minute time, the new offensive team will be allowed to start their next offensive drive.

**7. Fumbles:** All fumbles are down at the spot of the fumble. Fumbles may not be recovered by the opposing team nor may fumbles be advanced. No Stripping (no matter how hot you think you are). Attempting to strip the ball will be penalized (5) yards. If there is a defensive team player contacting the offensive player and a fumble results, the ball will be considered downed by contact and the offensive team will retain possession.

#### **8. Play of Game / Gender Play:**

**Section 1. Start of Play** No player shall put the ball in play until the referee declares it is ready for play. The offense has 30 seconds to put the ball in play after it is declared ready. The defense must stay behind the neutral zone puck until a 5 second count has expired. The defense may cross the neutral zone only after the 5 second count or if the quarterback hands off the ball to another player once the ball has been snapped. If the defense crosses the line of scrimmage before either of these two situations occur, an off sides penalty will be assessed.

**Section 2. First Downs** The field will be divided into four 20 yard zones by cones and/or lines. The offense must cross a line within four plays to get a first down despite where their drive begins. After the offensive team crosses midfield, the QB may no longer run the ball unless he is being rushed.

A team that fails to convert a first down by crossing a line within 4 plays (or scoring) loses possession to the opposing team.

The offense may punt on fourth down. The ball may not be advanced after catching a punt.

There will be no kickoffs. Each new drive will start on the opposite 10 yard line

**Section 3. Forced Gender Play** An offense must employ a female as the operative player within 3 consecutive downs.

An operative player is one who:

- a. Is the intended receiver in the eyes of the official,
- b. Is the primary runner (a gain is not required and the runner does not have to cross the line of scrimmage), or
- c. is a quarterback who attempts a pass (a gain is not required). If a male quarterback is sacked or fumbles the snap on a forced gender play, the next play must be another gender play.

Examples of Acceptable Gender Plays:

A female player lines up as the quarterback and is sacked.

A female player lines up as the quarterback and attempts a forward pass – that must go past the line of scrimmage.

A female player lines up as the quarterback and runs the ball over the line of scrimmage.

A female player receives a lateral or hand-off and runs the ball.

A female player receives a lateral or hand-off and attempts a forward pass.

A pass intended for a female player is deflected by a female player and is caught by a male player.

Plays using a female player and resulting in loss of down will still be considered a female play, e.g., female quarterback crosses line of scrimmage then throws ball.

A pass caught behind the line of scrimmage by a female player who does not successfully gain positive yards counts as a female play but not a completion.

Examples of Unacceptable Gender Plays:

A male offensive player deflects a pass that a female player catches.

A male quarterback intentionally throws the ball at a female player's feet or obviously over her head.

A female quarterback grounds the ball to stop the clock.

A female player lines up as the quarterback and laterals or hands the ball off to a male player or throws a forward pass *not* beyond the line of scrimmage.

A female player hikes the ball into play.

Defense Coverage for a Forced Gender play. On a forced gender play, the Male defensive team must play man-to-man. You must be within 10 feet of your man during man-to-man when guarding and in the line of play. However, if the offensive team is playing more females than the defense, the defense can use men to cover the extra female players. EX: If the male player you are guarding runs a pattern down the field, but is not involved in the gender play and it does not cause you to be near the gender play by not following no penalty will be assessed. i.e. staying on the line of scrimmage and out of the play at hand. Male defensive players can only leave their "man-to-man" assignment after the ball is in the air to tag the female player. Interceptions by a man may not occur unless the woman has touched the ball first. (see penalty) Men may not cover women on a forced gender play but may guard women on open plays. Defenders may not knock a thrown ball down at the line of scrimmage. ONLY the rusher of the quarterback, after the 5 second count, may knock ball down, but must cross line of scrimmage to knock down passed ball. If a female is quarterback on a forced gender play, the defense may use a zone defense.

**EXCEPTION:** If the play starts on the defensive teams 20yd. line (2nd hash mark, red zone) or less and is thrown in the end zone, the male defender may knock the ball down, but cannot intercept in the end zone. Men may guard women, except for gender plays. (See exceptions below.) If the offense plays

more than 3 women on the field for a forced gender play, then men may cover the additional women over the original 3. You are allowed to knock the ball down and/or intercept if covering the 4th, 5th, etc. female player in a forced gender. Acts as a true “man-to-man”. Only the first 3 women are involved in the TRUE “forced gender play”.

### **Exceptions When Team is Down A Female Player**

If the defense is down a female player, it may cover the offense's female player with a male player on a gender play. Or if the offense is playing with more than the required number of females, the defense may cover the extra females with males. The offense will designate to the referee which female is to be covered before the snap. Then, the defense must designate to the referee which male player is going to cover the extra female player. The defense must rotate its male players to cover the offense's extra female player. Once the rotation is complete, it must restart. Male player marking 3rd female can only knock down the ball.

- a. If the offense plays more than 3 women on the field for a forced gender play, then men may cover the additional women over the original 3.
- b. Women defensive coverage: On any forced gender play, women will have these defensive options; woman to woman, 10 yard cushion from the line of scrimmage, zone or may use a free safety.
- c. Offense. If the offense is down a female player, the defense may use their 3 women to play zone, but cannot double team.
- d. Exclusions. The slate is clean for extra points and punts.

**9. Scoring:** A touchdown (TD) will count as six (6) points. A safety will count as two (2) points. Interceptions of extra point attempts returned for score will count as two (2) points for the defense.

**For Extra Point Conversions:** The scoring team must immediately tell the ref if they are going for a short extra point attempt from the three yard line, or a long extra point attempt from the 12 yard line. An extra point executed from the three yard line will add one point. An extra point executed from the same spot with a female participant (QB, receiver, rusher) will add two points. An extra point executed from the 12-yard line will add two points. An extra point executed from the same spot with a female participant (QB, receiver, rusher) will add three points.

**Game Scoring:** Games are won by a one-point advantage. The referee, following each score, at halftime or at request of team captain, will announce the score. **Ties:** Tie games will be scored as such during the regular season. Sudden death rules will apply during the playoffs and the captains will be made aware of such rules before the tournament.

**10. GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP:** Please observe standards of good sportsmanship during your time with us. Most people are great but there are some sour apples out there who try to ruin everyone's experience.

***We understand that competition can generate strong emotions; however your emotions and actions must not negatively affect the enjoyment, comfort or safety of any of our other participants!***

Foul language is not acceptable. Learn new words such as “sugar” or “fudge.”

Taunting opponents is not acceptable. Tantrums (throwing objects and/or yelling) are not acceptable. You are not a teething two year old, so calm it down. Opposing team may call a time out and address

the referee for consideration if it is felt that bad sportsmanship is being displayed by one or more on the opposing team.

At the discretion of the ref, any displays of bad sportsmanship can result in the following penalties: a verbal warning, an unsportsmanlike penalty, player expelled from game, or any combination thereof. Additionally, a yellow card / red card system will be implemented this year. A yellow card will be given to a player for a lesser offense of unsportsmanlike conduct or any minor infraction of poor attitude or language. A red card will be given for more major offences or repeats of the prior yellow card offense. The decision as to whether an act is a red card or yellow card act is at the complete discretion of the referees. So, don't tempt them to figure out which level your unruly behavior might fall under. A red card means immediate ejection from the game and the player will be ineligible to play the following game as well. If any player obtains 3 cards (red or yellow) throughout the season they will be ineligible for the remainder of the season and playoffs.

If an individual is expelled from the game, that team may play down a player at the discretion of the referee. If a player is required to leave, play will only commence upon departure. Should player not leave facility that player's team will lose all points scored or the full game following the point of the infraction. Team penalties may also be imposed at this time.

We are serious about penalizing the flagrant use of foul language. Aside from being offensive, you are playing in park facilities that have young children around at all times. If your referee does not actively pursue infractions, notify LAA.

**11. Taunting:** If a player blatantly taunts an opponent, a call of bad sportsmanship shall be assessed. His/her behavior will be the determining factor. Simultaneous taunting is a verbal altercation. ANY PLAYER(S) GUILTY OF TAUNTING MUST BE SINGLED OUT AND PENALIZED. If a previous unsportsmanlike act has been committed and if this situation is BLATANT, the guilty player(s) must be ejected.

**12. Playoffs:** Unless otherwise noted in the specific league or tournament outline overview or rules, all teams will make the playoffs. Overall 1st place team is determined by regular season won/loss record. If there are tied teams, it will be broken by the higher plus point differential. If a tie still exists, overall head to head game scores will be compared. Playoff format will be single game elimination.

Playoff games will be bracketed in a standard bracket based on a pool of all the teams. Player eligibility may be challenged by opposing team captains or referees prior to the start of a playoff game or at the end of the first half. NO NEW PLAYERS will be allowed to play once the second half commences. A player who has not signed that team's waiver form is not eligible for play in that game. As long as the referees are in agreement that the player has played at least 3 regular season games, that player would be eligible for the next game, should their team progress (even if they miss previous tournament games), but ONLY if they have signed the team waiver when originally challenged.

PLAYOFF OVERTIME will begin with a coin flip. Winner will get to choose if they want to play defense or offense first. FIRST OVERTIME: Each team will get possession and 4 chances to score from the nearest 20 yard line. If a team scores the same scoring methods will be used from #9 in the league rules. If the first overtime ends in a tie, the team that had possession first will then get possession and 4 chances to score with the winner being decided by sudden death

**13. Referees:** All LAA leagues are organized for one or two paid referee to be on site per game. Referee is paid BY THE LEAGUE as part of your registration fees. So if they ask for money, please notify the local office. There may be a rare occasion that there is no referee present. In such a case, teams are to play a regular game, keep score and make courtesy calls. We apologize in advance should a no referee situation occur in one of your games. These game results will still count towards final standings.

LAA referees are provided to make the game run as smoothly and error-free as possible. Obviously, no one is perfect and there may be occasion to question an individual call if the referee hasn't already offered an explanation. The only person permitted to question a referee's call is that team's captain. Should any other person other than the captain approach the referee during a game, a ruling of bad sportsmanship may be applied.

LAA referees sometimes will offer an explanation of calls as they are made, but this is not required and should not be expected. Signals should be clear and known to players. If no explanation has been offered, it is at that time that a captain's inquiry would be appropriate. Please keep in mind your tone of voice and to form a question. Scathing sarcasm and/or a demonstrative proclamation demanding a response usually will not be viewed favorably and a warning or penalty may be imposed.

Whether you agree or not, the referee's judgment is the final word during the game.

Any foul or abusive language directed at the referee or within earshot will result in an automatic individual or team warning. Contrary to what you may think, no, you do not pay us enough to put up with abusive crap. A second warning will quickly be applied resulting in game expulsion. Possible suspension or league expulsion penalties may result as well.

Any physical action taken by any individual against a referee will be met with full prosecution by LAA against that individual including involvement by law enforcement. That individual will be banned from LAA league play and full team forfeiture may be imposed.

Please realize that referees can oversee hundreds of games each year and really do not care who wins. They do care about running a cleanly played game and that people enjoy their playing experience.

Any questions or concerns specific to your league's referees should be addressed to Lancaster AA staff and we encourage you to communicate with us while the season is underway so we can quickly address your concerns.

**14. Infection Control:** If a player suffers a laceration or a wound where bleeding occurs, the referee shall suspend the game at the earliest appropriate time. Upon suspension of play, the captain shall be informed that he/she has the option to, immediately, substitute for the player or call a timeout. If a substitute replaces the player, the opposing team shall be allowed to substitute one player. The injured player may return to the game when they have the appropriate bandage. If the player returns to the game, the referee should make certain that any lesion, wound or dermatitis is covered with a dressing that will prevent contamination to and/or from other sources. A wrist or sweat band is not considered a suitable bandage.

ONLY the injured player may be removed from the game under these circumstances. That player's team may make a substitution as necessary to replace the injured player even if it is in the middle of a half.

**15 Alcohol:** It is strictly forbidden to bring alcoholic beverages onto/into any Lancaster Parks facilities. Regardless of any other local guidelines, we do not allow open containers in any of our games - specifically in the bench area and playing field. If spotted, you will be asked to remove your stash. Failure to do so will result in an automatic suspension in addition to possible police involvement. Note that this restriction includes fans in attendance also.

If a player, in the judgment of a referee, is intoxicated, they will be removed from the game and receive a warning. A second offense shall result in league expulsion. We are not your mothers - unless she is a fabulous referee and then have her call us because we always need good refs – so common sense and personal responsibility are expected.

**16 Weather:** Unless notified in advance, you should consider your game to be played as scheduled. Should games be canceled in advance, we will contact captains directly and send out a league wide email and facebook message. There may be occasion when games are canceled while you are in transit and we apologize in advance for that inconvenience.

**17. Prizes:** There will be prizes for the winning team. Don't pester us with what they are. Ok, it's a water logged ball we found in that drainage ditch by the field. LAA does not offer cash prizes at this time as player feedback has been to keep league fees down as well as keeping stress levels to a minimum and avoid cash crazed players.

**Other Rules:** LAA utilizes most NCAA/NFL rules for penalties and yardage except as listed in these rules. If there are questions about penalties, yardage, etc., please have your captain immediately address the referees with your concern. If you have specific rules questions, ask your referee, or contact LAA for clarification

**18. Have Fun:** This is your leisure time, enjoy it. You're not playing for money, only the pride and prestige a Lancaster AA championship brings and the adoration of thousands of area residents wishing they were you. Who are we kidding, just have fun and remember it is just a game.

**19. Selected Penalties and Yardages** are in a table on the following page. These in no way constitute the only rule violations.

**20. Latest Version of Rules:** These rules have been updated as of 8/09/15 and shall remain in effect until such time as another update is required. Each captain is expected to stay current with the latest version of the rules.

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Updated 8/9/15*

<b>Five Yard Penalty</b>	<b>Ten Yard Penalty</b>	<b>15 Yard Penalty</b>
Delay Of Game	Intentional Grounding (also includes loss of down)	Unsportsman-Like Conduct
Offsides	Offensive Pass Interference	Taunting
Encroachment	Flag Guarding	Personal Foul
Not enough players on the line of scrimmage	Holding an offensive player while attempting to grab flag	Unnecessary Roughness
Illegal Formation	Illegal Forward Pass – Beyond line of scrimmage	Clipping
False Start	Illegal Touching – Offensive player going out of bounds then being the first to touch a pass	Tripping
Illegal Snap – Must be to QB and in a continuous backward motion	Illegal securing of flag belt – (also includes loss of down and possible player expulsion)	
Illegal Participation – Must be in the huddle before start of play	Illegal Downfield block	
Intentional Fumble to avoid deflag	Illegal Block in the Back	
Aiding the runner	Illegal Batting/Kicking of the ball	
Illegal Shift	Fake Punt	
Too many players on the field		
Defensive Holding		
Fair Catch Interference		
Illegal Procedure		