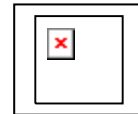


## Touch Football & Flag Football Grade 9: Handout



### History

Touch football is a version of American football originally developed by the U.S. Navy in the 1940's in which the players "tackle" the individual carrying the ball only by touching him/her with one or two hands, as opposed to tackling him/her bodily to the ground. The two-hand touch variation is the most popular. Depending on the skill of the players, the available playing field and the purpose of the game, the rules other than tackling aspect remain mostly the same to traditional American football. Touch football can be played by teams as few as two or as many as eleven on each side, usually games consist of teams of four to seven.

Flag football is also a version of American football with the basic rules of the game to be very similar, but instead of tackling or two-hand touch, the defensive team must remove a flag or a flag belt from the ball carrier to end a down. Players wear a belt with flags around the waist, but the number of flags varies from league to league. Like touch football, flag football was designed to an effort to minimize injuries that playing tackle football could bring.

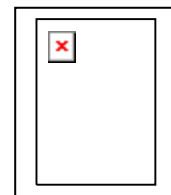
The object of the game is to score points by advancing the ball into the opposing team's end zone. The ball can be advanced by carrying it or by throwing it to a teammate. Points can be scored by carrying the ball over the goal line, catching the pass from beyond the goal line or kicking the ball through the goal posts on the opposing side. The winner is the team with the most points when time expires at the end of the last play.

### Game duration

The game begins with a coin toss to determine who will kick off and which goal each team will defend. The options are presented again to start the second half. The game consists of four 15-minute quarters with a half-time intermission after the second quarter. Rules on **first downs** vary depending on the playing group and field size. A **first down** is the first play of the set of a set number of downs allowed to the offensive team. There are four downs in American football and flag football and usually three downs in touch football. The team that takes possession of the ball has 3 or 4 attempts, called downs, to advance the ball 10 yards towards their opponent's end zone. When the offense gains 10 yards, it gets a **first down**, which means the team has another set of 3 or 4 downs to gain yet another 10 yards or score with. If the offense fails to gain a first down after 3 or 4 downs, the other team gets possession of the ball at the spot of the football, beginning with the first down. Except at the beginning of the halves and after scores, the ball is always put into play by a snap.

A down ends and the ball becomes dead when:

- if the player with the ball is touched or a flag is pulled
- if the ball/player with ball is out of bounds
- if the ball touches the ground before caught (incomplete pass)
- if a fumble occurs
- if a team scores



### Kickoff

Kickoffs occur at the beginning of each half or after a team scores a touchdown and/or field goals. The team's kicker tries to kick the ball as far as possible. If the kick returner catches the ball in his own end zone, he can either run with the ball or elect for a touchback by kneeling in the end zone, in which case the receiving team then starts its offensive drive from its own 20 yard line. Unlike punts, once a kickoff goes 10 yards, it can be recovered by the kicking team.

## Scoring

### *Flag football:*

A touchdown is worth 6 points. It is scored when a player runs the ball into or catches a pass in his opponent's end zone. After a touch down, the scoring team attempts a conversion. The ball is placed at the other team's 3-yard line. The team can attempt to kick it over the crossbar and through the posts for 1 point or they can run or pass it into the end zone for 2 points. A safety is worth 2 points and is scored by the defense when a ball-carrier is tackled in their own end zone. Safeties are also awarded if the offense fumbles the ball out of bounds in the end zone, has a kick blocked out of the end zone or commits certain penalties in the end zone. Safeties are very rare. A field goal is worth 3 points and is usually attempted on the fourth down instead of a punt when the ball is close to the opponent's goal line or when there is little or no time left.

### *Touch football:*

A touchdown is worth 6 points and a safety is 2 points. A single point occurs if the defensive team kicks the ball through the end zone of the offensive team, or the receiving team goes down on one knee or is touched their end zone. One point occurs for a conversion when the football starts on the 5-yard line and two points occur when the football starts on the 10-yard line.

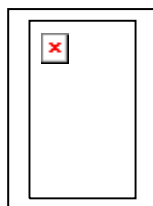
## Penalties

Fouls are punished with penalties against the offending team. Most penalties result in moving the football towards the offending team's end zone. If the penalty would move the ball more than half the distance towards the offender's end zone, the penalty becomes half the distance to the goal instead of its normal value. Most penalties result in replaying the down. Some defensive penalties give the offense an automatic first down. Conversely, some offensive penalties result in loss of a down. If a penalty gives the offensive team enough yardages to gain a first down, they get a first down, as usual.

If a foul occurs during a down, an official throws a yellow flag near the spot of the foul. When the down ends, the team that did not commit the foul has the option of accepting the penalty, or declining the penalty and accepting the result of the down.

A few of the most **common fouls** include:

- **False start:** an offensive player illegally moves after lining up for-but prior to the snap.
- **Offside:** a defensive or offensive player is on the wrong side of the ball when the ball is snapped.
- **Holding:** illegally grasping or pulling an opponent other than the runner.
- **Pass interference:** illegally contacting an opponent to prevent him from catching a forward pass.
- **Delay of game:** failing to begin a new play after a certain time from the end of the last one.
- **Illegal block in the back:** a blocker contacting a member of the opposing team (who is not the runner) in the back and above the waist.
- **Clipping:** a blocker contacting an opponent (who is not the runner) from behind and at or below the waist.



<b>Word Bank:</b>
-------------------

**Offense:** the team that has possession of the football

**Defense:** the team that does not have possession of the ball

**End Zone:** the area between the goal line and the end line where touchdowns occur

**Fumble:** the ball carrier drops the ball while in their possession; the ball becomes dead

**Interception:** when the defense catches a ball that was meant to be caught by the offensive team

**Line of Scrimmage:** is an imaginary transverse line crossing the football field across its narrow dimension, beyond which a team cannot cross until the next play has begun

**Offside:** movement across the line of scrimmage before the football is snapped

**Touchdown:** an offensive player having possession of the football in the opponent's end zone

**Rusher:** is a defensive player who rushes the quarterback on the snap of the ball

**Centre:** offensive player that snaps the ball to the quarterback; also a receiver

**Quarterback:** person who throws the football

**Receivers:** offensive player that runs pass patterns and catches the ball

**Defensive back:** a member of the defensive team that guards a member of the offensive team (man-to-man), or a player in their area (zone coverage's)

**Punter/Kicker:** a person who kicks off or punts the ball