



# **WASHINGTON STATE HIGH SCHOOL FLAG OVERVIEW**

# Dave Ralston

- Authored the WA Rule Book
- 13 years FLAG
- Officiated across USA, Ireland, China, Malaysia
- Officiated the 2024 World Flag Football Championships in Finland
- Two National Championship games on ESPN



# FLAG MASSIVE GROWTH

Originated during WWII

Varsity Sport: 2024 Failed

Rules: Very Fragmented

This will happen!

NFL FLAG, USA FLAG, IFAF,  
etc.

Already NAIA

Under review at NCAA

MEN'S & WOMEN'S  
**FLAG FOOTBALL**  
COMING TO THE LA28 OLYMPIC GAMES



The Most Basic Rule:

**Avoid**  
**Significant**  
or  
**Impactful**  
**Contact**

## **Avoid Significant or Impactful Contact:**

- **Keep Control of the Body**
- **Be Exceptionally Aware of the Space Around Them**
- **Anticipate / Avoid Contact As Much as Possible**
- **Play Within the Spirit of the Game**

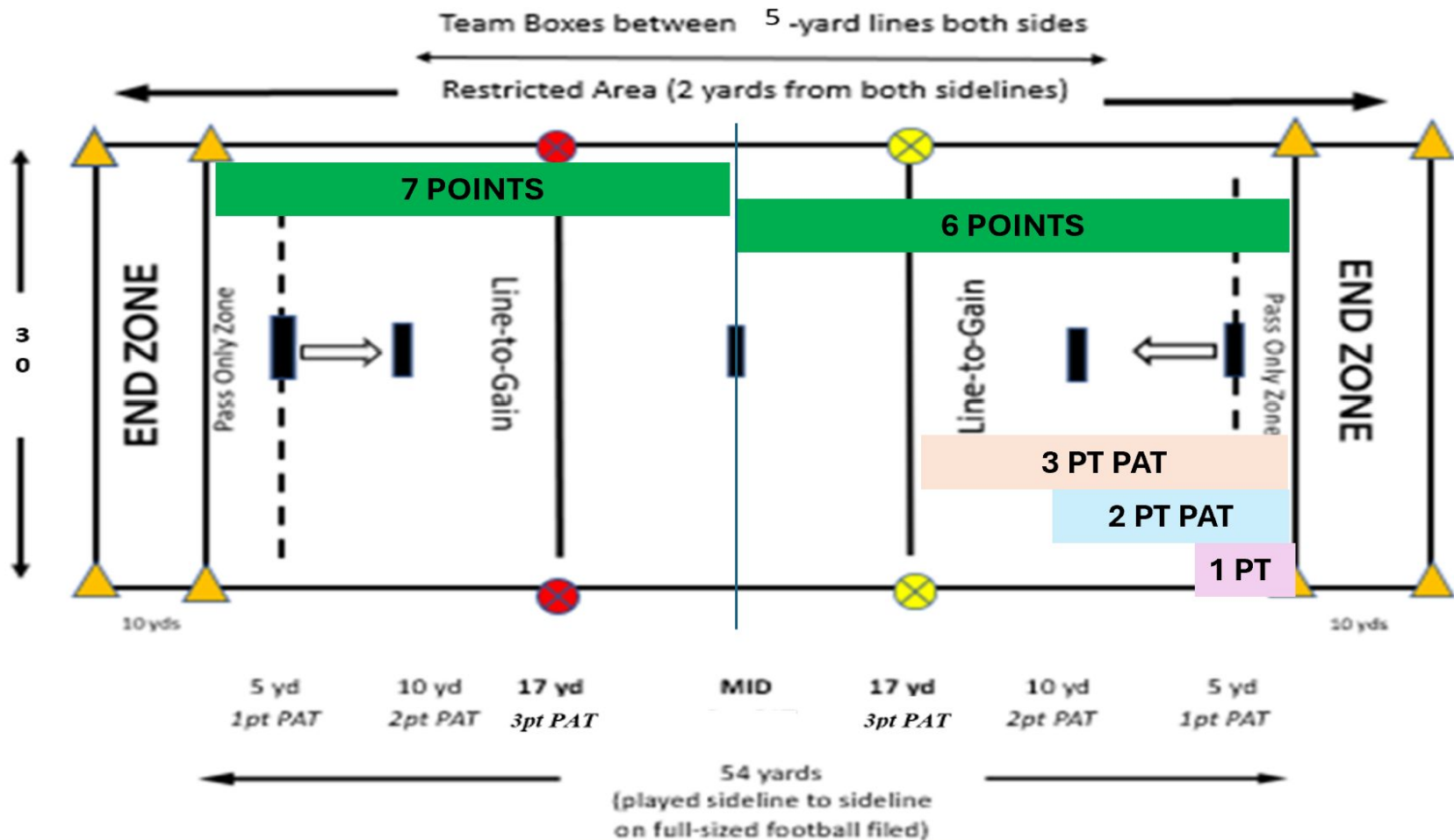
# Flag vs Friday Night Tackle

Unique Sport - Not Tackle *“Lite”*

Inclusive Game: Many Body Types / Skill Levels

Finesse vs Impact

Faster Pace, Unique Strategy, Skill Set, Timing and Scoring Systems





# RULE BOOK ANATOMY

## 2024 WASHINGTON STATE RULES!!

- **Last Update: September 15, 2024**

*Beware: Older Editions Exist*

- *45 Pages*
- *Featuring 10 Rules*
- *Two Page Summary*
- *Table of Contents*



# RULE BOOK ANATOMY

- Rule 1: General Administration
- **Rule 2: Uniform / Equipment**
- Rule 3: Clock Mechanics
- Rule 4: Coin Toss
- Rule 5: Scoring
- Rule 6: Challenge Procedure
- Rule 7: Offense
- Rule 8: Defense
- Rule 9: Overtime
- Rule 10: Officiating

**RULE 2 - Be an Expert!**

We need **Athletic Directors**  
and **Coaches** support!

## Rule 2: We Need Support

- LEGAL Mouthpieces Required!
- No pockets





## Rule 2: We Need Support

- Shirts Tucked or Legally Knotted
- Can't Interfere with flag belt
- Compression Garments Are National Standard

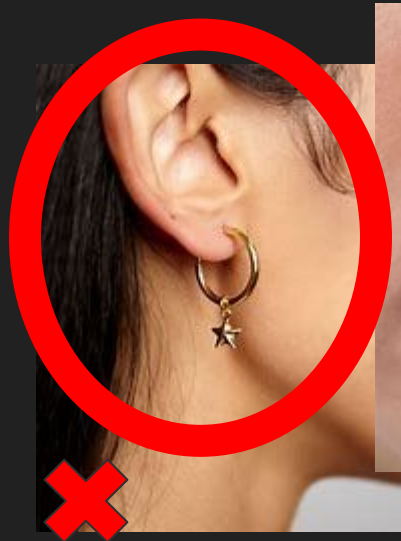


## Rule 2: We Need Support



**Stocking-style caps, soft-shelled rugby-style scrum hats are generally acceptable. No Hard, unyielding material or surfaces**

## Rule 2 - We Need Support



Jewelry that might endanger players must be removed or TAPED to the body. "Close to the Body" stud ear / nose piercings are generally acceptable



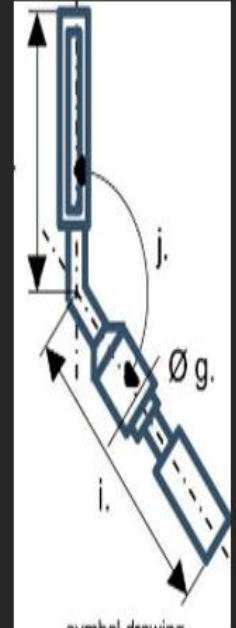
## Rule 2: We Need Support



- Players must wear a tightly, fixed flag belt at the waist.
- The waist is defined as: halfway between the bottom of the ribs and the top of the hip bones just above the naval.
- The entire belt, including any excess strap, must be secured tightly.

# Flag Alignment

*The flat part connected to belt  
must be  
Against the Body  
(Down and Away)*





# Flag Alignment





**Red Flags/Red Shorts - Not allowed**  
**Must be contrasting color**



**Shirt Untucked**  
**Non-Contrasting Flags**

**PRE\_GAME**  
(Equipment Checks,  
Coin Toss Etc.)



**PRE-GAME**

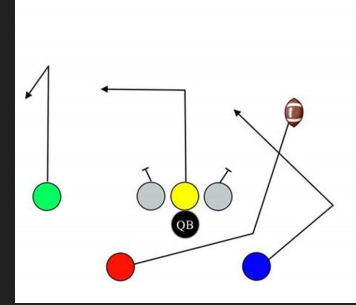
**NOT AT KICK OFF  
TIME**

**PLEASE  
PLAN  
AHEAD**

**BE READY!**

# BASICS

7-on-7, *minimal-contact*



Avoid contact judged **SIGNIFICANT** or **IMPACTFUL**

No **BLOCKING**

**SCREEN** only in **BACKFIELD**





Defenders can  
**SAFELY** Dive  
To Capture  
Flags

**Significant** or  
**Impactful**  
Contact is a  
Foul

# 7 Second Play Clock

- Begins at the Snap
- Ends
  - Ball changes hands
  - 7 Second Clock expires
    - Down Consumed
    - Previous Spot

No “Intentional Grounding” Foul





## Screening vs Blocking



ONLY behind the line-of-scrimmage

Comparable to BASKETBALL re: Contact

Hands / arms either across their chest, behind back or hanging at sides

Neither offense / defense may initiate contact to gain advantage

# All Players are Eligible Receivers:FREE RELEASE: NO JAMMING, CHUCKING





# Defenders May Cross Line of Scrimmage:



- 7 or More Yards Prior To Snap
- Forward / Backwards Pass
- Ball Handed Off
- RPOs Invite Defenders!

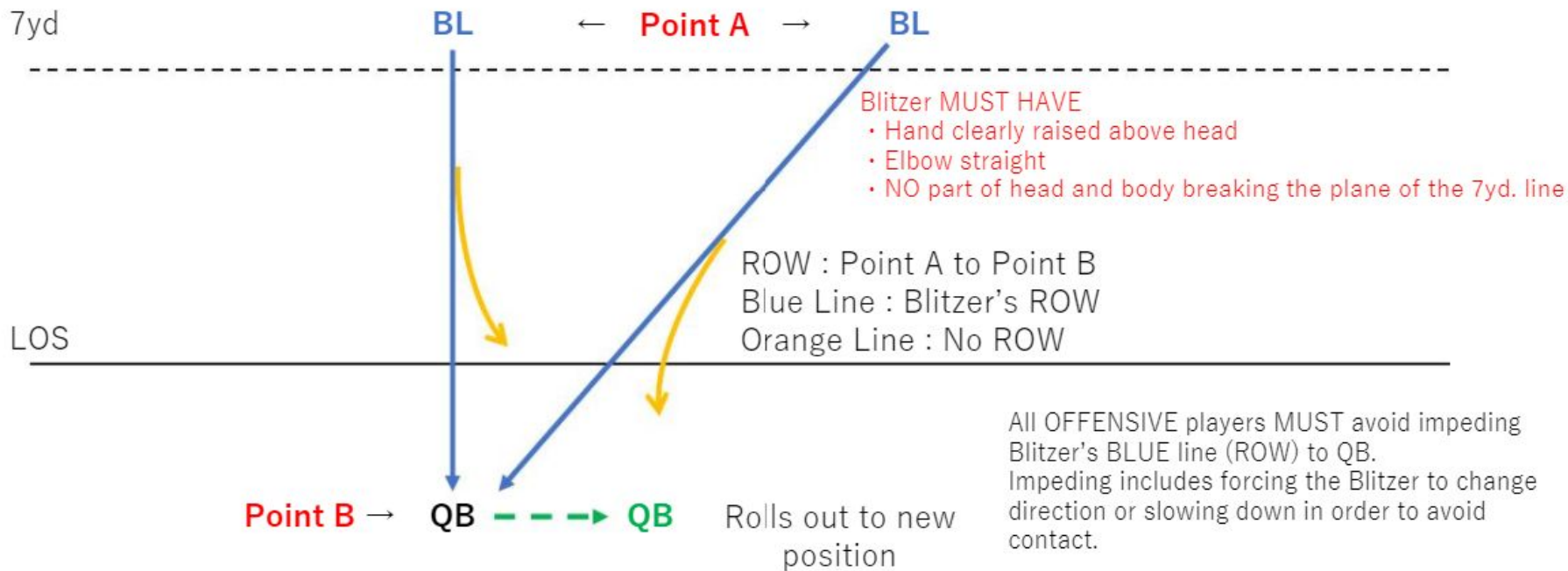


# Illegal Signal

# Valid Signal



# Blitzer ROW (Right Of Way)



All OFFENSIVE players MUST avoid impeding Blitzer's BLUE line (ROW) to QB. Impeding includes forcing the Blitzer to change direction or slowing down in order to avoid contact.

(Note: Shielding can be either contact or non-contact penalty)

# No Stripping

- No stripping / “attempting” to strip
- Includes “chopping” or “hammering” at the ball



# Ball Carriers: Avoid Significant or Impactful Contact



- Can Safely Spin/Jump Spin
- Cannot put another player at risk
- No Ball Carrier Diving
- No Hurdling



**Flag-Guarding:** **Physically** denying the defense the opportunity to capture the flag



Examples of **flag guarding**: stiff arming, pinning the flag, swatting, using the ball as a stiff arm, etc.

# May Use Backward Passes, Pitches



- Anywhere on the Field
- Hits Ground: Dead Ball
- Defense Can Intercept

Spot the **BALL**, not Hips, etc.





# 4<sup>th</sup> Down: Coach's Decision



- *“Punt or Play?”*
- **No Actual Punting (move to opposite 5-yard line)**
- **Fail to achieve Line-To-Gain; Turn The Ball Over Where It Became Dead**

# Onside Play



- Only Available in Last 2-minutes of Game
- Team Must be Behind or Tied in Score
- Ball spotted at the 5-yd line
- One Play To Get to Mid-Field or Beyond After All Live Ball Fouls are Adjudicated

## Ask me...

- C: 253 223 3363
- [daveralston2007@yahoo.com](mailto:daveralston2007@yahoo.com)
- Kurt Chambers
- [kpchambers21@gmail.com](mailto:kpchambers21@gmail.com)

