



FLAG FOOTBALL

TEACHING GOAL

Students should not only memorize rules. They should learn a repeatable process for watching a play, recognizing what happened, ending the play when appropriate, and clearly reporting what they saw to the adult referee. P-BVUSD assigns one adult referee assisted by junior-high student referees.

1. BEFORE THE PLAY

Know the possession/start spot and be ready to watch the action in your assigned area. P-BVUSD possessions begin at the 30-yard line at the start of each half and after each score.

2. DURING THE PLAY

Watch the action - especially the runner's flags, boundary/catch situations, hurdling, diving into the end zone, flag guarding, and standing blocks.

3. END OF THE PLAY

Recognize why the play ended: flag pull, legal tag when flags are missing, incomplete/out-of-bounds result, score, or whistle.

4. REPORT WHAT YOU SAW

Give the adult referee a short, factual report. Student officials assist; the adult referee leads the crew and has discretion over clock stoppage after scores and penalty enforcement.

5. RESET

Be ready for the next play. Keep track of special restart situations such as the 30-yard start after a score or the scoring team's own 40 after a safety.

P-BVUSD GAME FORMAT AT A GLANCE

GAME	CLOCK	TIMEOUTS	TIE
2 x 16-minute halves	Running clock; final 2 minutes regulation clock	2 per half	No overtime

TEACHER DRILL: RUN ONE PLAY AT A TIME

- Have students watch a short practice play without calling anything first.
- Ask: **What ended the play?** Then ask: **Was there a rule issue before the play ended?**
- Require the student official to report only the facts observed: runner lost a flag, runner used a hand to prevent the pull, receiver controlled the ball with one foot in bounds, etc.
- Repeat until students can separate **what they saw** from **what they assume happened**.



MAKING THE CALL

RULE	DECISION	WHAT TO LOOK FOR	TEACHING CUE
CATCH	LEGAL / COMPLETE	Player controls the ball with at least one foot in bounds.	Teach students to look for control + one foot in bounds.
HURDLING	CALL IT	Player jumps over another player who has at least one foot on the ground.	The handbook prohibits hurdling in this situation.
END-ZONE DIVE	CALL IT - OFFENSE	Offensive player dives into the end zone.	Defensive players may dive to pull flags.
SPINNING	LEGAL	Runner spins without using the hands to prevent the flag pull.	Spinning by itself is not a penalty.
FLAG GUARDING	CALL IT	While spinning, runner uses hands to block or push away another player's hand.	The hand action changes the play from a legal spin to flag guarding.
MISSING FLAGS	TAG ENDS PLAY	Ball carrier loses flags while possessing the ball, or a player without flags gains possession.	Defense only needs to tag the runner.
FLAG BELT	CALL THE ISSUE	Belt is looped, twisted, or manipulated to create an advantage.	Belts must be clipped normally; rule emphasizes uniformity/fairness.
HUDDLE	REQUIRE ALL PLAYERS	If a huddle is used, every player on the field must participate.	Do not treat a partial-team huddle as compliant.

BLOCKING - WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO SEE

- **Legal district block:** offensive blocker performs a standing block with forearms and hands folded against the body.
- **Not automatically a penalty:** forearms extend on the follow-through but remain parallel to the chest.
- **Lineman receiving a handoff:** legal only after the lineman turns 180 degrees with both feet and is at least one yard behind the line of scrimmage.

TEACHER DRILL: SHOW TWO VERSIONS

- Run a legal spin, then a spin where the runner uses a hand to knock away the defender's hand. Ask students which one becomes flag guarding and why.
- Run a ball carrier with flags, then have the flag belt fall off. Students should immediately know the defense now ends the play with a tag.
- Demonstrate a standing block and a follow-through with forearms still parallel to the chest. Have students explain why the second action is not automatically a penalty under the district rule.



GAME MANAGEMENT

1 SPECIAL GAME SITUATIONS

SITUATION	P-BVUSD RESPONSE
Start of half / after score	No kickoff. Possession begins at the 30-yard line.
Punt	No rushing allowed.
Safety	Scoring team gains possession on its own 40-yard line.
Final 2 minutes	Use a regulation clock.
Score / penalty enforcement	Clock stoppage is at the referee's discretion.
Tie at end	Game ends tied. No overtime.
No official available	Coaches officiate.

2 INADVERTENT WHISTLE - KNOW THIS COLD

- **Whistle during a legal snap, pass, or kick:** replay the down.
- **Whistle while a player has possession:** the team may accept the play as it ended OR replay the down.
- **Teaching point:** students should immediately tell the adult referee when the whistle occurred and whether a player had possession.

3 TEACH STUDENTS TO REPORT, NOT ARGUE

WEAK REPORT	BETTER REPORT TO THE ADULT REFEREE
"I think he cheated."	"The runner used his right hand to push the defender's hand away while the defender reached for the flag."
"She was out."	"She controlled the catch with one foot in bounds."
"His flag came off."	"The flag belt came off while he had the ball; the defender tagged him here."

4 CLASSROOM / FIELD PRACTICE SCENARIOS

- **Scenario A:** Runner spins; defender misses the flag. No hand contact occurs. Students identify the spin as legal.
- **Scenario B:** Runner spins and pushes the defender's reaching hand away. Students identify flag guarding.
- **Scenario C:** Receiver controls the pass with one foot in bounds. Students identify a completed catch under the district rule.
- **Scenario D:** Runner's belt falls off while carrying the ball. Defender tags the runner. Students identify the tag as ending the play.
- **Scenario E:** Offensive player dives into the end zone. Students identify the prohibited action; repeat with a defender diving to pull a flag and distinguish the two.
- **Scenario F:** Whistle sounds while the ball is in the air on a legal pass. Students state: replay the down.
- **Scenario G:** Whistle sounds while a runner has possession. Students state the team's two options: accept the play as ended or replay the down.

STUDENT READY CHECK

Before a live assignment, the student should be able to: explain the game format; distinguish legal spinning from flag guarding; recognize hurdling and offensive end-zone diving; explain the missing-flag tag rule; recognize the district standing block; state the punt, 30-yard, safety, and inadvertent-whistle rules; and give a short factual report to the adult referee.