

## P.E. SPORTS AND ACTIVITIES

# FLICKERBALL



*“Do you know what my favorite part of the game is? The opportunity to play.”*

**Mike Singletary**, American football coach and former professional football player

## INTRODUCTION

Flickerball is played in many physical education classes as well as an intramural sport. It’s a game that involves running, catching and throwing. The game is played with a football with the objective of advancing the ball by passing to a position from which a goal can be attempted. Flickerball can be played with as few as four players or as many as twenty or more. Players are equally divided into two teams.



Flickerball has been described as a game of touch football without a line of scrimmage. Once you cross the line of scrimmage, you can throw the ball again and again. The sport incorporates elements of field hockey, soccer, football, basketball and rugby. It can be played indoors on a basketball court or outdoors on a football field. Flickerball is a non-contact sport.

## HISTORY

Officials at Davidson College, in Davidson, North Carolina, believe the sport originated there in 1951. Prior to 1951, Davidson students had played touch football. Due to the number of student injuries the college president, John Cunningham, and college physician, James Woods, banned the game. In the place of football, a combination football with basketball rules called tag football was adopted.

It wasn’t long before other colleges adopted tag football. However, at Davidson, the game developed a unique set of rules. It is believed that the term “Flickerball” first came into use in 1954 at Davidson. Men first played the game, and in 1974, the first female flickerball game was played at Davidson.

Although Davidson's claim to have invented this sport is convincing, others believe the game was first played at the University of Illinois in 1949, invented by H.E. Kenney and A.H. Seidler.

## HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

### Basic Rules

Any player on either team can handle the ball at any time. The ball is moved toward the goal only by passing. The player in control of the ball is not allowed to move toward the goal while in possession of the ball. The ball can be carried laterally or backward, two steps. If a player gains control of the ball while advancing toward the goal, he is allowed one and one-half steps in which to stop his advance or to swerve to a lateral direction.



Many Flickerball games are played with two 20-minute halves. Time is called when the ball is dead and each team is allowed three 2-minute time outs per half. Some, however, prefer to play the game non-stop and without time limits.

Any attempted goal results in a loss of possession of the ball. The goals are located out of bounds with the specific intent of forcing the shooting team to throw the ball out of bounds and therefore lose possession. After a goal attempt, the defense puts the ball in play by throwing the ball in bounds from behind its own end line. It is important to work the ball close to the goal for a good shot.

A ball that hits the ground by the offense will go to the other team.

A player who gains control of the ball while advancing toward the goal is allowed a maximum of one and a half steps in which to stop or swerve in a lateral direction.



A player who is called for traveling must place the ball on the ground in order for the nearest opponent to put the ball in play.

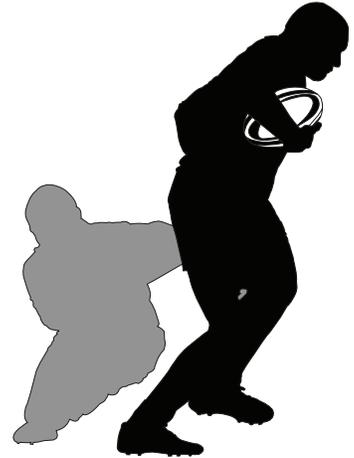
A loose ball that remains on the field of play is a free ball, which may be played by any player.

All attempted shots must be thrown with a one handed overhand forward motion. No player is allowed to keep possession of the ball for more than 5 seconds. The penalty for doing so is a loss of the ball at the location of the infraction.

Change of possession occurs when a pass is not completed.

### **Passes**

If the offensive team attempts a forward pass which is incomplete, though there was no interference of a defensive player, possession of the ball will be given to the nearest player of the defensive team who will put the ball in play. If a forward pass is incomplete because a defensive player is the cause, like batting the ball out of the hands of the passer or receiver, or out of the air, the ball remains free and may be played by either team, unless it rolls out of bounds.



### **Jump Balls**

Each half begins with a jump ball at the center. The center jump is a ball tossed between two players. The person first getting the ball after the center jump must pass the ball laterally. A player other than the jumper must touch the ball before the jumper may handle the ball.

Players other than jumpers must be outside the imaginary circle until the ball is batted. A jump ball on the sport is used to settle all held ball situations.

Held balls are jumped at the spot, with the player receiving the tip being required to pass the ball laterally.

Some simply have a coin toss to determine which team will have the initial throw off. Still others start the game with the throwing team throwing the ball to the receiving team.

### **Back Court and Front Court Rules**

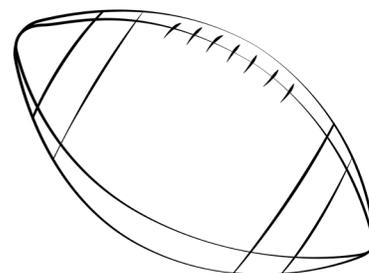
When putting the ball in play in the back court area, 10 seconds is allowed to advance the ball into the front court or scoring area. The penalty for not doing so is a loss of the ball to the defense. Once the ball is in the front court, the offense must continue to play the ball in this area until a shot is attempted or until the ball is lost to the defense. Teams who gain possession of the ball out of bounds have 5 seconds to put the ball into play, otherwise the ball is given to the opposing team where the ball went out.

### **Substitutions**

Substitutions may be made any time the ball is dead. Any number of players may be substituted during a time out period. A player out of play because of a penalty may not be substituted until he re-enters play.

### **SCORING**

A goal is scored by throwing the ball into the hole or by striking the face of the backboard. If the ball goes through the hole, 3 points are scored. A shot that strikes the face of the board is worth 1 point. A three-minute overtime is played to break a tie.



### **SKILLS AND TECHNIQUES**

Accurate passing and catching skills are crucial in Flickerball. To be a successful Flickerball player, you must have good passing and receiving skills.

When passing, you should face your target, step with the opposite foot of the throwing hand, and roll the ball off of your fingertips as you release the ball, creating a spiral. Be sure to follow through with your arm once the ball is released.

When catching the ball, face the passer. Your eyes should be kept on the forward point of the ball and catch the pass with your hands rather than trying to trap it against your body with your arms. Arms and hands should be loose and relaxed. When the receiver is running away from the passer, or receiving the ball at or below the waist, the ball should be caught with your hands in a thumbs-out position.

Your eyes should always be on the ball. If a pass receiver is looking over her left shoulder, and the pass is arriving over your right shoulder, you should pivot so as not to lose sight of the ball.

Being able to run fast and dart quickly about the field makes you a good receiver as well as a good defensive player. Quickness and agility are assets in this game.

This game is not all about offense. It is important to have good defensive skills too which include: rebounding, deflecting or intercepting the ball.

As a player's skills increase, it becomes an excellent game for building speed, endurance, power and coordination.

**EQUIPMENT AND CLOTHING**

A regulation leather or rubber football is the official ball in this sport. The Flickerball goal is a two-foot by three-foot rectangular hole positioned in the middle of a four-foot by five-foot rectangular board. The surface of the goal is at right angles to the sidelines, as is the case with basketball backboards. The bottom edge of the hole is eight feet above the ground.

The goals for the indoor court are on the center of the end line, while on the outdoor field they are five yards behind the end line. The board is made of wood, plastic, metal or any other durable material and is painted a bright orange.

There is no special clothing worn for this sport. Team colored jerseys make it easier when there are many players. This helps a passer to quickly spot a member of their own team.



**FLICKERBALL NOTES**

Flickerball is played in many physical education classes. Some schools even offer it as an intramural sport. Many colleges and universities offer this sport as part of their physical education offerings or as an intramural sport. It is an easy game to adapt, there can be just a few players or many.

Flickerball is a game that can be played by a variety of age groups, no special equipment or skills are needed. If you can run, pass and catch, you can likely play flickerball. And since it is a non-contact game, no padding or helmets are necessary. Good sportsmanship is always expected!

In addition to the websites listed below you can also visit YouTube and type in Flickerball to find out more about this sport. Here you will be able to see players in action as they explain some of the basics and more of Flickerball.

**Check out these websites for more information about Flickerball:**

[En.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flickerball](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flickerball)

[sites.davidson.edu/archives/encyclopedia/flickerball](https://sites.davidson.edu/archives/encyclopedia/flickerball)