



FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

UPDATED: 8/8/2025

ALL DIVISIONS

- Games are played 6 on 6 unless listed otherwise listed in final page under Division Specific Rules
- The home team will start 1st half with the ball; away team in 2nd half
- All players will receive equal playing time throughout the game.
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has **four** plays to cross midfield.
- Once a team crosses midfield, it has **four** more downs to score a touchdown.
 - **Competitive only:** Team will have the option to “punt” on 4th down. No actual punt will take place, rather offensive team can decide to “punt” on 4th down, resulting in the opposing team taking possession at their 5 yard line.
 - An unsuccessful fourth down attempt results in a change of possession, with team taking over at the line of scrimmage following the fourth down play.
- Recreational - All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense’s 5-yard line.
- **DECEPTIVE PLAYS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED.** Trick plays are allowed that fall within the rules of the game. If there are questions regarding the definition of each, please contact the Director of Football or an official for clarification.
- For a game to be “official” and for standings, within five minutes of scheduled game time, each team must have no fewer than two players less than standard from their own roster or the game will be forfeited. Borrowed players will also result in a forfeit.

Coaches

- All coaches must wear be cleared through security clearance and have their approved coaching shirt to be on the sideline. NO photographers/videographers allowed on sideline
- Any communication with the referee should be done so respectfully and in a clarifying manner.
 - Referee has authority to call unsportsmanlike penalties if not adhered.
- Coaches may be in the huddle with playbook (printed sheets/tablet) but may not have a writing utensil to draw up new plays. Play clock will be enforced

Tie Game/Overtime

- Recreational League Regular season games will remain a tie, no overtime (**playoffs will play OT**)
- Competitive League: All games (regular season & playoffs) will have a winner & play OT if needed.
- OT Format
 - Visiting team will start with the ball.
 - Both teams will get an offensive series starting from the opponent’s 10-yard line
 - Conversion attempt from the 5 yd line will follow a touchdown; normal extra point rules.
 - Team with most points at end of series will be winner
 - 2nd Overtime: – winner is determined: Coin toss (home team calls). Coin toss winner will decide offense or defense.

- Team on offense will get 1 play from 5 yd line, if they score they win. (Regular extra point rules apply)
- If Defensive team stops offense from scoring, they win.
 - If a defensive penalty, down is replayed from spot; if on ensuing play, defense commits back-to-back penalties, game is over; team committing two penalties will lose the game.
- Defensive penalties (pass interference, illegal contact, etc) will not results in an automatic first down. Down will be replayed with ball moved half the distance to goal line.

Playing Equipment

- Players are not allowed to participate in practice or games with a hard cast, soft cast, or splint on any body parts.
- Flag belts are to be worn with 1 flag on each hip and on 1 flag on the back. Jerseys must be tucked in.
- No hats or jewelry is to be worn.
- Mouthpieces for games and practices are recommended but not required. Players are responsible for mouthpieces.

Game Timing

- 2- 20 minute halves, running clock asides from timeouts, injuries and change of possession. (Clock runs during extra points)
- Play clock is 30 seconds from time ball is set by referee to when it's snapped
- 4-minute half time
- Change of Possession: Clock stops at the conclusion of a conversion attempt, following an unsuccessful fourth down play or when a competitive team has declared a punt. Clock resumes as soon as referee has spotted the ball; 30 second play clock also starts when ball is set.
- Clock stops on injuries
- Each team gets 3 – 60 second timeouts per game.

Scoring

- Touchdowns – 6 points
- All extra points taken from 5 yd line. Running play is worth 1 point, pass play worth 2 points.
 - Offensive team does not have to declare if they are going for 1 or 2.
 - Any ball thrown forward from the QB's hand is a pass; a throw lateral or behind the QB's line is considered a run and would be a fumble if dropped.
- Safety – 2 points (no safeties in PREK & 1st/2nd- ball placed at 5 yd line)
- Turnovers on extra points may not be advanced by the defense and the play is over.

Defensive Formation (REC ONLY) *NEW

- Only two (2) defensive players may start on the line of scrimmage.
- All other defenders, must start 3-5 yards off of the line of scrimmage.
- Defensive coach on the field will be required to assist and monitor this.
- Failure to comply will result in an "illegal rush" penalty.

- **Competitive Only:** There is no limit on the players allowed to line up on the line of scrimmage prior to the snap of the ball.

Defensive Plays/Rushing the Quarterback

- Players not rushing the quarterback may defend up to the line of scrimmage, until the ball is handed off or there is a forward pass. If the quarterback makes a forward pass behind the line of scrimmage, the defender may step across the line of scrimmage to pull the flag of the receiver.
- Once the ball leaves the Quarterback's hand either with a forward pass, lateral, or handoff, all defenders may go beyond the line of scrimmage. Rushing defenders **WILL** be allowed to deflect passes during rush.
- If defensive player makes contact with QB (regardless if ball is deflected or not) it is illegal contact.
- Offensive team may not snap the ball until rush cone is set.
- An offensive player is down where their hip is located when a defender pulls their flag. There is not "extending of the ball" over a line to gain a first down or score.
- **Only one player** may rush the quarterback
 - The player rushing must start beyond the line marked by the rush cone (10-12 yards) and start at the cone.
 - Player must be within 1 yard of the cone and be established to referee prior to snap.
 - Only one (1) defensive player may be at the rush cone.
- **Competitive only:** quarterback will have 7 seconds to distribute the ball to a teammate or the play is blown dead and a loss of down.
 - *Count will be 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, then whistle on 7. Ref will extend his arm out to the side and verbally count out loud.*

Interceptions

- Interceptions are live and may be returned for touchdowns. Interceptions are the only changes of possession that do not start on the 5-yard line. The ball will be spotted where the flag is pulled by the opposing team.

Start of Offensive Series

- **Recreational:** The play will start when the quarterback holds the ball in his hand, standing at the line of scrimmage, and gives a clear cadence call to start the play. No center snap or silent count. Offensive player will start with the ball extended.
- **Competitive:** Each play will start with the ball on the ground and a center snap. Snap must be through the center's legs and a continuous motion. Movement without a complete snap would be a false start penalty. Play begins when the ball moves. Quarterback may not hand the ball back to the center as a "center sneak", but the center is eligible to go out for a pass.
 - Quarterback can receive the snap from under center or from a shotgun, but a ball that hits the ground is blown dead as a fumble.
 - Rushers who move up from the rush cone on a hard count must get back to the cone before the actual snap to be eligible to rush the quarterback.
- There is no limit on the number of offensive players who can line up on the line of scrimmage.
- Only one player is allowed in motion at a time, running laterally.

Running

- The quarterback cannot run beyond the line of scrimmage with the ball, unless the ball has already been handed off or passed to another player.
- A run play may not be used in "No Run Zones"
 - "No Run Zones" – Located 3 yards from the intended scoring end zone
 - Laterals or Pitches are allowed to be used in a No Run Zones as long as they are followed by a forward pass
 - The ball may only cross the line of scrimmage from a forward pass.
 - Teams may pitch, use handoffs or lateral passes behind the line of scrimmage but they cannot advance the ball past the line of scrimmage **until forward pass is made across the line of scrimmage.**
- Handoffs, laterals, pitches.
 - The player who takes the handoff, lateral, or pitch can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
 - Once the ball has been handed off, lateraled, or pitched all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- Spinning & jump cuts are allowed, there is no diving or jumping to advance ball up field. Play will be blown dead if player dives or jumps to advance ball up the field.
- Flag Guarding is not allowed and is defined as the offensive player intentional guarding his/her flag or pushing away the hand of the defensive player who is attempting to pull the offensive player's flag. ***It is not considered flag guarding if the offensive player is using his/her normal running motion.*** Lowering of the shoulder to run over a defensive player is not permitted.
- Laterals or pitches behind the quarterback's forward progress are allowed, and are considered a running play
 - If the player receiving the ball then throws a forward pass, it would be considered a passing play.
- When a running player's flag is pulled, they are down where their hip is located (no extending the ball over the line).

Receiving

- All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off or passed backwards from the quarterback).

Dead Ball (Substitutions may be made on any dead ball)

Passing

- Passing is defined as one player throwing the ball to another player while the ball travels in a forward flight. If the ball is caught the receiver may advance the ball. If the ball is dropped the pass is incomplete, and the play is over.
- A quarterback is the player who throws a forward pass. He continues to be the passer until the pass ends, or until he moves to participate in the play.
- Shovel passes are allowed and considered a forward pass.
- Once ball is snapped the QB cannot step over the line of scrimmage. If the ball is handed off, passed forward, or lateraled to another player, that player can run past the line of scrimmage. If that player would like to throw the ball, he/she may not step past the line to attempt a pass. Attempting to pass the ball

beyond the line of scrimmage will result in an Illegal Play Penalty. The offensive team will be penalized 5 yards and a loss of down.

- After a forward pass is completed, laterals are allowed as long as they are pitched behind the player in possession of the football. There is an unlimited amount of laterals allowed once the forward pass is completed.

Play is ruled “dead” when:

- Ball carrier’s flag is pulled
- Ball carrier steps out of bounds
- Touchdown or safety is scored
- Ball carrier’s knee hits the ground
- Player dives with the ball
- When a runner loses his/her flag belt either accidentally, inadvertently (not removed by grabbing or pulling), or on purpose, play continues. The deflagging reverts to a one-hand tag of the runner between the shoulders and knees and the play is ruled dead.

Note: There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground or at the point where the ball carrier fumbled if the ball is fumbled forward. Defense may not “strip” the ball and take possession.

Blocking

- There is no blocking!
- A player blocking (shadow or other contact) will cause the play to be over at the point of the penalty. There will be a 10 yard penalty from the spot of the foul, and loss of down. Coaches are encouraged to teach their players if the ball doesn’t come to them to continue running away from the play.

Defensive Penalties

- *Offside* = 5 yards and replay the down.
- *Pass Interference* = 10 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
- *Illegal Contact* = 10 yards from the spot of the foul and automatic first down
 - Holding, blocking, straight arming, etc. (***If a player dives for a flag and causes a player to fall it will be deemed illegal contact (intentional or non-intentional). If a player dives for a flag and pulls a flag without knocking down the player, it will be deemed a legal flag pull without penalty.***)
 - The defensive player may not wrap his/her arms around the body (bear hug/holding) while searching to pull the flag
- *Illegal Flag Pull* = 10 yards from end of play and automatic first down
 - Pulling flags before receiver has ball.
 - If a defender pulls an offensive player’s flag before the offensive player catches the football, play continues until the defense one-hand touches the deflagged player; a penalty will then be assessed where the player is down
- *Illegal Rush* = 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down

- o Rushing from inside the line established by the rush cone, or rushing more than one defender at once
- In OT – no defensive penalty will result in automatic first down- replay of down with ball moved half the distance to goal line.

Offensive Penalties:

- *Illegal motion* = 5 yard penalty, replay down (more than one person moving before the offense is set)
- *Illegal forward pass (QB steps over line of scrimmage)* = 5 yard penalty and loss of down
- *Illegal contact* = 10 yard from the line of scrimmage, loss of down (Pushing, blocking, etc.)
- *Offensive pass interference* = 10 yards from the line of scrimmage, loss of down
- *Flag guarding* = 10 yards spot foul
- *Delay of game* = 5 yards – NO loss of down
- *Shirts not tucked in causing interference with the pulling of flags* = 10 yard penalty and the ball is down at the spot of the foul
- Games will not end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

- Any taunting, illegal play, verbal abuse of referee or opposing team will result in an automatic =15-yard penalty.
 - o If the unsportsmanlike play happens after a player scores, the score will be removed. The ball will be spotted back at the original line of scrimmage and the 15-yard penalty will be added on.
 - o **If this occurs on a defensive interception (return for touchdown) the touchdown will be called back & ball will be placed at midfield. The team who intercepted the ball (defense) will retain possession.

DIVISION SPECIFIC RULES

All Divisions

- Ball Size
 - Preschool-Kindergarten: Mini
 - 1st-4th Grade: Pee Wee
 - 5th/6th Grade: Junior
 - 7th-8th Grade: Youth
- All post-touchdown conversions taken from 5-yd line
 - Teams are outside of no run zone
 - Passing conversions worth 2, running worth 1

Recreational: Preschool-Kindergarten

- No score kept
- PREK GAMES WILL BE 5V5.
- 1 coach is allowed on the field for both offense and defense
- No referees
 - o Coaches facilitate game, keep time, and enforce rules
- Teams begin drives on own 5-yard line

- Every drive has exactly six plays, no more, no less
- If there are remaining plays following a TD, drive starts at midfield
- Game ends 50 minutes after scheduled start time
- No halftime necessary

Recreational: 1st-8th Grade

- Running and passing is allowed.
- 1 coach is allowed on the field for both offense and defense.
- No center snap; play starts with ball in QB hand
- 1st-2nd grade only: No safeties; if downed in end zone, offensive team will remain with ball on 5 yd. line.

Competitive Divisions

- Running and passing is allowed
- Offense uses center snap.
- Defense can blitz one player from rush cone AND QB has only 7 seconds to release ball
- 3rd-6th Grade: 1 coach allowed on field
- All tie games go to OT

CCV Stars Flag Football will follow the National Federation of State High School (NFHS) Association Football Rules with modifications listed below to fit the needs of our league. Please refer to NFHS Football Rulebook for items not listed here. Rules are subject to change at the discretion of CCV Stars.