



# Flag Football Rule Book



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## Players and Rosters:

**Divisions, Team Rosters, & Game Line Ups** – Teams are split into divisions based on grade (K-8). A roster of eligible players will be maintained by ACYS and all roster modification are subject to ACYS approval. Roster changes may occur until the 2nd game of the season.

- K to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade 6v6 with a minimum roster size of 8 players and maximum roster size of 12 players.
- 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade 7v7 with a minimum roster size of 9 players and maximum roster size of 14 players.

Teams may have up to 3 coaches on staff. All rostered coaching staff must be background check approved by ACYS. Each player **MUST** play 2 quarters, and coaches are encouraged to give player equal playing time over each game.

Only players listed on the official roster on record with the league are allowed to play. If a team is found to be using a non-rostered player during a game:

- If it is during the regular season, then the team forfeits all games in which the player participated.
- If it is during the playoffs, then the team is disqualified from further play.

### Players on More Than One Team

The same player may not play on more than one team in 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade divisions. If a player is rostered on more than one roster, they must register and pay the full fee for each team.

## Playing Field

The field is 30 yards wide, 70 yards long and is divided lengthwise into two zones of 25 yards each, which lie between two end zones of 10 yards each. The field also includes extra point markings at 5 and 12 yards from each end zone.



## EQUIPMENT

**Uniforms:** A complete uniform includes an ACYS approved Jersey, shorts, shoes, and socks must be worn by all players. **A protective mouth piece is mandatory.** Players of opposing team must wear different colored jerseys with a number. If both teams have the same color, then one team will have to wear colored pennies provided by ACYS. **Jerseys must be tucked in at all times** so they do not cover the flag belts. Each player **must** wear pants or shorts without any belt(s), belt loop(s), pocket(s), or exposed drawstrings. The pants or shorts must be a different color than the flag. Footwear may be sneakers or non-detachable rubber cleats shoes. **Metal spikes, hard casts, and jewelry are prohibited.**

**Flags:** Player must wear the flag belts provided by the league. Players must have the belt with two flags attached, one at each side, from the beginning of a down through the play. No article of clothing may cover any portion of a player's flag. The belt must be properly secured and remain snug and unimpeded by clothing. Wrapping, tying knots or in any way securing the flag belt to the uniform is illegal.

**Game Ball:** The game ball shall be standard youth –size football constructed of leather, composite leather, or similar material. ACYS will supply a game ball. Subject to approval the offense may use their own ball provided it is similar in size and construction to those provided by the league.

K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade uses a Pee wee size football.

4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade uses a Junior size football.

## **CANCELATIONS & FORFEITS**

From time to time the League may be forced to cancel games due to inclement weather or other circumstances which preclude play. Every attempt will be made to contact teams in a timely fashion. Coaches must check with the Field Marshal before leaving the field or allowing players to leave.

**Forfeits:** If a team cannot field at least 5 players at official start time, the game will be a forfeit. If a team is more than 10 minutes late for their game start time, the game will be a forfeit.

**Unscheduled Forfeits:** in consideration of the fact that each game is made up of two teams and two sets of parents whose time is valuable to them, any game not played as it was scheduled will result in a \$25.00 fine to the forfeiting team, a loss in the standings and won't be made up.

**Schedule Changes, Cancellations or Exceptions:** Game time/day changes or cancellations due to personal circumstances will result in a \$25.00 game change fee and the cost of referees (\$50) for the newly scheduled game. These games are discouraged and will be made up only if convenient for the non-changing team. If the game cannot be made-up it will result in a loss for the forfeiting team and the normal \$25.00 forfeit must be paid.

# RULES OF PLAY

## Game Format:

- A game will consist of four (4) 10 minute quarters, separated by 5 minutes halftime.
- Before the one-minute warning of each half, the game clock will run continually, except when an injury occurs, a timeout is called, or the official deems it appropriate to stop.
- During the final 1 minute of each half a “pro clock” will be used which will stop after incomplete passes, running out of bounds, change of possession, or during extra point attempts. Clock does not stop on the first downs.
- Each team gets 2 timeouts per half, each of which will last for 30 seconds.
- The offense must put the ball in play within 30 seconds of the “ready for play” whistle.
- A coin toss determines which team takes first possession of the ball. The winner of the toss chooses whether or not to receive the ball first in the first half or 2<sup>nd</sup> half OR the side of field. The loser of the toss will then choose from the remaining option.

**Start of Play:** There will be NO kick offs or punts. Start of play will begin at the 12yd line or the point of interception is returned to (whichever is father). Change of possession due to lack of first down also begins at the new offensive team’s 12yd line.

**Playing Time and Number of Players:** It is the goal of the League to provide every child the opportunity to develop as an athlete. With this in mind, it is required that all players receive at least two quarters playing time during each game and that each player be actively utilized. Games in which players do not receive the minimum playing will result in a forfeit. Play shall consist of 6v6. In the event that only five players are present for a given team, they shall be allowed to play with five, although the opposing team shall still be allowed to play six unless they choose to play down to match the other team. The max number is 12 players per team.

**Substitution & location of Coaches:** Players may be substituted at the quarter or half time only. Grades 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> players may be freely substituted after any dead ball. Players must play 50% of the game. Grades 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> qualifying for the end of season tournament all players must have played 50% of three or more regular season games.

Teams in violation may forfeit their game.

**K, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade divisions** – 2 coaches per team are allowed on the field to instruct players.

**3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade divisions** – 1 coach is allowed on the field to instruct players. Defensive coaches must be off the field prior to the snap. Offensive coaches may be 15 yards behind the quarterback.

## OFFENSE

- **Snapping the Ball:** The center must snap the ball between the legs. The center must snap and release the ball to the quarter back for a legal play to begin. On center sneaks, the ball must be handled around the leg, not back through.

- **Number of Downs:** Each team will have 4 downs to advance the ball across the next first down marker or into the opposing end zone. After a team crosses the first down marker, it receives 4 more downs.
- **Ball Position:** The location of the ball carrier's front foot (not the ball) at the end of the play will determine where the ball is spotted.
- **Passing Plays:** Every player is eligible to catch the ball. The quarterback can even catch it after he has handed it off. A player must have one-foot-in-bounds for a catch to count. If a simultaneous catch takes place, the ball is dead and belongs to the offensive team. A ball which falls from the passer's hand shall be judged according to the following:
  - If there is any forward motion by the arm, the ball is ruled an incomplete forward pass and returned to the line of scrimmage.
  - If there is not forward motion, the ball is ruled a fumble and dead at the spot the ball touches the ground. The ball will be spotted at the point it contacted the ground and play will proceed to the next down.
- **Running, Laterals & Fumbles:** The player who receives the snap (the quarterback) may not run the ball beyond the line of scrimmage. The quarterback must hand off the pitch to another player to execute the running play. Multiple handoffs and laterals are allowed, but the quarterback remains ineligible as a runner. However, the quarterback is allowed to receive a forward pass. Spin moves are allowed, as are multiple laterals. Fumbles are dead as soon as the ball hits the ground and the ball will be placed where it hits the ground.
- **No-Running Zones (Pass Only Zones):** There are 5 yard no-running zones approaching the first down marker and end zone. When the line of scrimmage ties within one of these zones, no running plays are allowed. This means that the offense must attempt a forward pass beyond the line of scrimmage. Handoffs, pitches and laterals are allowed, but must lead to a forward pass attempt beyond the LOS.
- **7 Second Rule:** After the ball is snapped the offense has 7 seconds to attempt a forward pass or to run the ball beyond the line of scrimmage. 10 seconds for K-2<sup>nd</sup> graders only. Results in loss of down only.
- **Blocking:** Screen blocking is allowed, however a blocker must be SET in a stationary position a minimum of 1 yard from an approaching player when impeding a defensive player's progress. If ANY contact occurs, and the blocker is moving, then it results in an illegal screen. No intentional contact is allowed by the offense or defense (e.g. use of hands, cross body or roll blocking, pushing).
- **Receiving:** A completion results when the receiver has control of the ball with at least one foot in bounds (college rules). An offensive player cannot go out of bounds then return in bounds to receive a pass. However a player that was pushed out of bounds and returns in bounds remains eligible.
- **Motion:** No more than 1 player at a time is allowed to be in motion when the ball is snapped. More than one player may go in motion before the snap, however all but one must be set a minimum of one second before the ball is snapped. The player in motion may not move toward the line of scrimmage until the ball is snapped.

- **Restrictions:** Ball carriers are prohibited from using hands, arms or the ball to impede access to the flag belt. (Flag guarding/stiff arming). The ball carrier cannot lower his/her head to drive or run into a defensive player (Charging). The ball carrier may not hurdle or jump over another player unless it is to avoid injury.

## DEFENSE

- **Flag Pulling:** No intentional contact is allowed. This includes tackling, pushing, grasping, and bumping. This also includes touching the face or head in any way. Incidental contact to the ball carrier's body while reaching for the flag belt is not a violation. If the ball carrier's flag falls off without being touched; he/she is down when a defender comes within arm's length of the ball carrier. Throwing or spiking the flag after a pull is not allowed.
- **Rushing:** Any number of defensive players are eligible to rush the quarterback if he/she lines up behind the rushing line when the ball is snapped. The rushing line is marked by the official and is 7 yards from the line of scrimmage. This 7 yard distance applies even if the first down line or goal line is less than 7 yards from the line of scrimmage. When the quarterback gives the ball to another player, all defensive players immediately becomes eligible to rush, regardless of whether they lined up behind the rush line. The rush(s) may not make contact with the passer's arm, his/her hand, or the ball while it is in his/her hand. If he/she does, the call will be roughing the passer. To avoid this penalty, coaches should encourage their rushes to go for the flag, not the ball.
- **Pass Interference:** No contact with the receiver is allowed unless it is a simultaneous effort by both players to get the ball. Players may not block or push the receiver in any way to prevent him from catching a pass. Penalty for defensive pass interference is 10 yards from the previous line of scrimmage. The penalty for offensive pass interference results in a 10 yard penalty and no loss of down. Intentional pulling an opponent's flag before they have possession of the ball will be deemed Defensive Pass Interference and will carry the same penalty.

## SCORE VALUES

**Touchdown** – 6 points

**Point after touchdown** – 1 point from the 5 yard line 2 points from the 12 yard line.

**Safety:** 2 Points

**Extra point attempt** (from 5 or 12 yards) intercepted and returned to opposing end zone: 2 points

## OVERTIME

If a game is tied at the end of the second half, play transitions to a tiebreaker period. A coin toss is used to determine ball possession and direction is the same way as the beginning of the game. Each team is allowed one possession. Possession will begin at the half line. The only exception is if the first offensive team throws an interception. In this case, the game ends with the intercepting team winning.

- First possession choice goes to the winner of regulation coin toss.
- Each team gets one possession
- **If a regular season game, then it is ruled as a tie.**
- **If a playoff game, the game will continue until a winner is determined.**

## PENALTIES

Dead ball penalties are blown dead immediately. With all other penalties the flag will be thrown but the play will resume with all defensive penalties accepted, the play will be repeated. With offensive penalties, besides the loss of down penalties listed below, the defensive team will have the choice to accept the penalty, repeat the down or decline the penalty and take the play as is. Penalties are either imposed from the point of infraction or from the line of scrimmage. The offended team always has the option to decline. When the penalty is greater than the distance to the defensive penalty, unless the offense chooses to decline it. The spot of the ball after a penalty is walked off and will then be used in determining a first down. Example: If a player crosses the first down line then flag guards, and the penalty brings the ball back before the 1<sup>st</sup> down marker, there would be no first down awarded.

### **Dead Ball Penalties (5 yards, play blown dead)**

- False start/illegal procedure – offense
- Delay of game (30 second time limit)
- Illegal motion – more than 1 player in motion at time of snap
- Running from a No-running Zone

### **5 Yard penalty from line of Scrimmage (flag thrown, play resumes)**

- Illegal Rushing the Quarterback
- Offside – defense (encroachment)

### **10 Yard penalty from the line of scrimmage**

- Offensive pass interference (replay down)
- Defensive pass interference
- Illegal screening (blocking)
- Roughing the passer
- Illegal forward pass

- Unnecessary roughness – offensive and defensive
- Fighting (plus ejection)
- Interference with progress of the game by coaches or any team personnel
- Removing receiver's flag belt before he/she contact the ball
- Unsportsmanlike conduct
- Too many players on the field or disqualified player entering the game
- Equipment violation (ex. illegal wearing of the flag)

#### **10 Yard penalty from point –of- infraction**

- Flag guarding/stiff arming
- Hurdling or diving to advance the ball by the ball carrier
- Charging – failure to attempt to avoid defender by the ball carrier

#### **10 Yard penalty from point –of- infraction (repeat down)**

- Flag guarding/stiff arming
- Hurdling or diving to advance the ball by the ball carrier
- Charging- failure to attempt to avoid the defender by the ball carrier

#### **10 Yard penalty from point -of-infraction (repeat down)**

- Tackling
- Holding, pushing, obstructing, or hitting the ball carrier or the ball.

#### **EJECTIONS**

A player may be ejected from the field for using indecent language, unsportsmanlike conduct, or an egregious violation of the rules. To eject a player, the official shall notify the coach, who is responsible for removing the player within two minutes to avoid a forfeit. The official must then submit a written ejection report to the League by the end of the day. Any player ejected may be put a probation with possible suspension, depending upon the severity of incident. ACYS shall have full discretion when imposing penalties. Our league is intended to provide a family-oriented environment for the enjoyment of children. All coaches, parents, fans and players are expected to show good sportsmanship a tall times. ACYS, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to eject, suspend, or dismiss anyone whose behavior is deemed inappropriate.

#### **Rule Review Request**

**The Official's judgement is final**, however a head coach may request a conference with the referees to review a RULE if he feels it is inconsistent with the current rule book. This request must be made immediately after the play in question and prior to the net play. As soon as the next play is ran or the half officially ends, the call may not be changed. To request a review, the head coach must call time out and inform the head official that he is requesting a review of the rule. If the final decision is in the coach's favor, the time out with be returned; otherwise the time out is forfeited. In response to



a request, the referee shall meet with the coach on the field. Only referees, the head coach and one assistant coach may participate in the conference. After conferring, the referee shall issue a ruling, to be communicated to the coaching staff on both teams. The official may, at his discretion, confer with the Senior Official or anyone else he finds helpful. The final ruling is to be made by the official and may not be appealed at a later time.

## Game Day Team Requirements

**Home Team:** provides a line of scrimmage marker volunteer. The person will keep track of the downs and move along the line of scrimmage as it changes with the down marker. (Schedule will specify home or away)

**Away Team:** will provide a volunteer to keep score for the game. This person should not be a child or player on either team.

Each team must assist their players in putting on the flags in a correct and timely fashion. At the end of the game the first thing players should do, even prior to the handshake is remove their flag belt and hand it to the referee. Thanks!

## Blood & Mercy Rule

**Blood Rule:** players who sustain injury causing an open wound will be required to leave the game. A player may not re-enter the game until the flow of bodily fluids is stopped, the wound is covered and all soiled articles of clothing are replaced.

**Mercy Rule:** If a team is 24 or more points ahead at any point in the game the losing team shall be allowed to add one additional player to the field. The leading team must go for 1 point on all touchdowns and all interceptions by the leading team shall be declared dead immediately, and the ball will be put on the 12 yard line. The leading team may not rush the passer on defense and on offense must run the ball with a maximum of the handoff (unless they are in the no run zone). If the lead goes back under 18, the mercy rule shall no longer be in effect, and the trailing team must take the extra player off the field. If a team is leading by 18 at the 1 minute warning of the second half the clock will run continually instead of using a "pro-clock".



**Thank you for your dedication to our youth!**