



APPENDIX D FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

1. Overview

- A. Flag Football is a game played between two teams of seven players.
- B. All players are eligible as pass receivers.
- C. Each team must have seven players to start the game.
- D. The game may continue with no less than six players.
- E. Special formations are not required.
- F. Field Goals are not permitted.

2. Field and Markings

- A. The field dimensions shall be 80 yards (goal line to goal line) x 40 yards (sideline to sideline) with the end zones between 5 and 10 yards long. The field from goal line to goal line shall be broken up into four (4) equidistant zones. For example, if the field dimension is 80 yards, there shall be four (4) twenty yard zones.
- B. If necessary the field may be shortened to no less than 70 yards
- C. (from goal line to goal line) x 35 yards (from sideline to sideline)
- D. for the A level and no less than 60 yards x 35 yards for the "B"
- E. and "C" levels
- F. Zone markers may be placed along both sidelines but not on the field and shall be constructed of a soft, pliable material.
- G. Lines shall mark all boundaries and zones.
- H. The team box is the area at least two yards from the sidelines between both twenty-yard lines.
- I. Non-players, no more than five certified coaches, and substitutes must remain in the team box at all times.

3. Game Equipment

- A. The official A ball shall be a "youth" sized 7 ball.
 - 1. **Note: Some manufacturers use different names for their version of the ball. It is one size below the official high school sized ball. NIKE Composite Leather Spiral Tech (Youth)**
- B. The official "B" and "C" ball shall be a "junior" sized 6 ball.
 - 1. **Note: Some manufacturers use different names for their version of the ball. It is two sizes below the official high school sized ball. NIKE Composite Leather Spiral Tech (Junior)**
- C. A team may use its own ball for plays from scrimmage and kicks provided it uses the same ball for each.
- D. Multiple balls may be used in rainy weather conditions, as determined by the referees. This may include balls supplied by each team if necessary to maintain a ball in suitable condition.
- E. The CYO Office reserves the right to designate an official ball manufacturer for conference play and playoff games.
- F. Whenever an electronic scoreboard is not available the official shall be the timekeeper.

4. Home Team Responsibilities

A. For Home & Home games, the home team must provide one official

Note: The visiting team may provide a second official at their expense.

B. A down marker and a competent adult to operate it in place prior to the game.

C. For Centralized games, the home team only must provide a competent adult to operate the down marker.

D. For both Home & Home and Centralized games the home team must adjust its uniform if the team colors are similar.

5. Player Equipment

A. Helmets, shoulder pads, rib pads, hip pads, hand and arm pads, gloves, and any other hard surface materials are illegal.

B. Soft shell helmets with velcro tightening straps are permitted.

1. NO METAL OR HARD PLASTIC IS PERMITTED ON THE HELMET.

2. **Note: Athletic supporter and cup may be worn.**

C. Soft pliable knee or thigh pads may be worn only on the prescribed areas.

D. Knee braces are legal provided they are deemed safe by the official.

E. Casts and arm braces are illegal.

F. Jewelry is not permitted.

G. Headgear (bandannas, headbands, hats, etc.) are not permitted.

H. Grip enhancing substances are illegal.

I. Tennis shoes or molded cleats must be worn.

J. Metal or screw-on cleats are not permitted.

K. Flags:

1. Only official CYO flags are permitted.

2. CYO flags must be purchased from the CYO office.

3. Each team must provide its own CYO flags.

4. The flags must contrast with the color of the pants/shorts.

5. Flags and flag belt may not be altered in any way without express written permission from the CYO office.

Note: Knotting flag belt is considered altering.

L. Each player of a team shall wear a uniform that is neat in appearance and of the same color as the rest of the team. Each player shall be identified by a number located somewhere on the uniform, which is not a duplicate of a teammates number and visible to officials.

M. Mid-cut jerseys are not permitted.

N. Shirts must be tucked in so that the belt is visible.

O. Jerseys may not be taped, tied, or altered in anyway.

P. Jerseys may not in any way interfere with the pulling of the flag.

Q. Jerseys that are torn or ripped are not permitted.

Note: CYO recommends that all coaches carry extra uniforms.

R. Athletic shorts or pants are permissible but must meet all of the following:

S. The color shall contrast with the color of the flags.

T. Only one pair of pants/shorts may be worn.

U. Undergarments may not extend below the shorts.

V. For safety concerns, pockets, belt loops, and rivets are not permitted and may not be covered with tape or sewed.

W. CYO STRONGLY RECOMMENDS THAT ALL PLAYERS USE A MOUTHPIECE.

6. The Game

- A. The visiting team shall call the pre-game coin flip. The winner of the flip may choose to *kick, receive, or defer* his choice until the second half.
- B. Teams shall switch goals after each quarter.
- C. The ball shall be placed in the middle of the field for all downs and kicks.
- D. The team in possession has a series of four downs to advance the ball into the next zone.
- E. A kicked ball may bounce or roll until touched by a player.
- F. A kicked ball which is possessed by the player who makes the first touch is considered live if it does not strike the ground or any other player after the touch. That player becomes a legal ball carrier and is subject to all rules governing the ball carrier. If the ball does strike the ground or another player after the touch, it is declared dead at the spot of the first touch.

7. Timing

- A. The game shall be four ten-minute quarters with running time. Intermission shall be one minute after the first and third quarters and five minutes between halves.
- B. During regulation, the clock shall stop for:
 - 1. Time-outs
 - 2. scores
 - 3. penalties
 - 4. incomplete passes if the losing team is within 16 points in the final two minutes.
 - 5. legal intentional grounding
- C. Clock restarts:
 - 1. On first touch by receiving team on kickoffs and punts.
 - 2. On snap after time-outs.
 - 3. On snap on kickoffs that go out of bounds.
 - 4. On snap after kickoffs or punts that go out of bounds after a time-out.
 - 5. On snap after the first delay of game penalty that is called.
 - 6. On the officials spot of ball after penalties and when incomplete pass rule is in effect, including legal intentional grounding.

8. Scoring

- A. A touchdown is worth six points.
- B. Point(s) after touchdown may be attempted as follows:
- C. One point from the two-yard line.
- D. Two points from the five-yard line.
- Note: Point after kicks are not permitted**
- E. Safeties are worth two points.
- F. A safety is followed by a free kick from the twenty-yard line by the team who allowed the safety.
- G. A team has twenty-five seconds from the officials' spot signal to put the ball in play.

9. Overtime

- A. A coin flip shall be held and called by the visiting team. The winner may choose to play either offense or defense.
- B. The offense shall choose to attempt either a one or two point conversion.
- C. The defense will then go on offense and have the same choice.
- D. The process will continue until the tie is broken after each team has had an equal number of downs on offense.
- Note: Teams will alternate being on offense to start each overtime period.**

10. Time-outs

- A. Each team shall be granted three time-outs per half.
- B. Each time-out shall last no longer than one minute.
- C. No time-outs may be carried over to the second half.
- D. No additional timeouts will be granted for overtime but any time-outs remaining from the second half may be used.
- E. A team with no remaining time-outs may be granted one in the following circumstances:
- F. Injury
- G. To appeal a disputed interpretation of a rule or a regulation.

Note: If team loses the appeal, it will be assessed a delay of game penalty.

11. Mercy Rule

- A. If a team leads by twenty-five (25) points at the end of the third quarter or any point thereafter it shall be declared the winner.
 - 1. Should there be a 25 point or greater lead at any time during the game, Officials may, at their discretion, halt the game and declare the leading team the winner.
 - 2. Under the same conditions, the Head Coach of the losing team may also request the Official halt the game.
- B. The game may continue at the mutual agreement of the coaches and under the following conditions:
- C. No score may be kept.
- D. For winning team, substitutes must be used. Starters removed should roster permit.
- E. Officials/Site supervisors at centralized sites may shorten or eliminate the period if games are behind schedule.
- F. Officials/Site Supervisors may cancel the period if in their opinion one team is trying to embarrass the other or poor sportsmanship is being demonstrated.

12. Kicking

- A. The ball shall be kicked off to start each half and after each point after touchdown attempt.
- B. Kickoffs shall be from the thirty-yard line (at the middle of field) and must travel at least twenty yards to the receiving line. (30 yard line)
- C. All players in the game for a kickoff must be inbounds and behind the kicking or receiving line.
- D. When the kickoff travels the required distance, is not touched, and goes out of bounds the ball will be placed on the receiving line.
- E. If the ball goes out of bounds without traveling the required distance, the receiving team may:
 - 1. Take possession of the ball where it was declared dead.
 - 2. Force a re-kick after a five-yard penalty is assessed.
- H. A player may not kick a ball that held by another player.
- I. A ball entering the end zone untouched is declared a touchback and is spotted at the 20 yard line.
- J. The kicking team may never recover a kick.
- K. Punts may be declared on any down.
- L. Punts must be made from five yards behind the line of scrimmage.
- M. The defense must have five men on the line of scrimmage for a punt.
- N. Defensive linemen may not move, raise hands, wave, or attempt to block a punt.
- O. Linemen may not move on a kick other than the center who may move one step in either direction.
- P. If the ball touches the ground after it is snapped but before it is punted, the ball is dead at the spot it touched the ground and the down counts.
- Q. Punts must be kicked promptly, judged at the discretion of the official.
- R. A ball that strikes the ground after the first touch shall be declared dead at the spot of the first touch
- S. A kicked ball that hits a player and is caught by another player on the same team before it hits the ground is live.

13. Blocking

A. A teammate of a runner may block with any part of the hands, shoulder, or outer part of the arm provided the blocker's hands are:

1. in advance of the elbow.
2. inside the frame of the opponent's body.
3. between the shoulders of the blocker and the opponents
4. apart and never in a locked position
5. open with the palms facing the frame of the opponent.
6. never used in a striking motion.

B. Arms may not be bent at the point of contact and then extended:

1. above the waist of the opponent.
2. not in the back of the opponent.
3. below the neck of the opponent.

C. A blocker must have one foot on the ground.

1. Downfield blocking on a passing play is not permitted until the ball is caught or is thrown behind the line of scrimmage.

14. Snapping the Ball

A. A legal snap occurs when the:

1. Snapper has his shoulders parallel to the line of scrimmage.
2. Ball travels between the snapper's legs.
3. Ball is released by the snapper in a continuous backward motion.
4. Ball is not lifted for adjustment.
5. One player may be in motion during the snap provided he is moving parallel to the line of scrimmage.

15. The Ball Carrier

A. The ball carrier must attempt to avoid the defense using his agility. (Charging)

B. The ball carrier may not steer his blockers by physical contact.

C. The ball carrier may not run within one yard of the offensive center. (Running up the middle.)

Note: Once the ball is possessed by a player one yard outside of the offensive center, the rule no longer applies. On the direct snap, the initial move cannot be directly up the middle.

D. The ball carrier may not guard his flag.

E. The ball carrier may leave the ground to avoid a flag pull. However, if in doing so, the ball carrier charges into a defensive player, this will be considered charging

F. The ball carrier may not dive to advance the ball.

G. If the flag falls off the ball carrier the play will be dead where flag comes off.

H. If the ball returns to a player whose flag has been removed the player must be

I. touched on shoulders or below to end the play. (Touch on head is illegally, live ball.)

J. If ball carrier loses ball by accident and is caught before it hits the ground by either team the ball is live

K. In order for a ball carrier to enter a zone he must have foot or flag and ball on or over the line he is attempting to cross. Ball always must cross line.

16. Passing

- A. A player must have possession of the ball and one foot inbounds to complete a pass.
- B. If both feet are off the ground and a defender causes the receiver to go out of bounds the pass is considered complete.
- C. A receiver who goes out of bounds is ineligible unless he was forced out of bounds by a defender.
- D. A receiver may be bumped at the line of scrimmage until he makes a break in either direction.
- E. A team may make as many forward passes as they wish so long as the passes are from behind the line of scrimmage.
- F. Once the ball advances past the line of scrimmage no further forward passes may be made.
- G. An offensive player may not intentionally ground the ball.
 - 1. **Exception: In the last two minutes of the game, an offensive player who directly receives the snap from the center may intentionally ground the ball to stop the clock.**
- H. A defensive player may not make unnecessary contact with the passer or ball while the ball is in possession of the passer.
- I. If the contact is caused by the passer's forward motion there is no infraction.
- J. An offensive player may not be within five yards of the sideline as the ball is snapped ("Hideout").

17. Defense

- A. A defensive player may use his hands
- B. A defensive player may not:
 - 1. Strike a player on the head
 - 2. Hold an opponent
 - 3. Push a teammate into another player
 - 4. Push the ball carrier
 - 5. Pull a flag prematurely
 - 6. Touch the offensive center until the center stands up or takes a step
 - 7. Pull an opponent's shirt provided the shirt is not hindering the pulling of the flag
 - 8. Strip or attempt to strip the ball
 - 9. Cross the line of scrimmage prior to the snap
- C. If the last defensive player with a chance to make a play on the ball carrier commits a penalty on the ball carrier the play will be ruled a score
- D. A ball intercepted in the end zone may be run out or downed

18. Penalties

- A) Five Yards and Repeat Down from Line of Scrimmage:
 - 1. Delay of Game
 - 2. Illegal Participation
 - 3. Running up the Middle
 - 4. Violation of Team Box
 - 5. Encroachment*
 - 6. False Start*
 - 7. Illegal Motion*

***Play is dead on snap immediately.**
- B) Five Yards and Loss of Down from Spot of Foul:
 - 1. Illegal forward pass, handoff, or pitch
 - 2. Intentional grounding
- C) 10 Yards and repeat down from line of scrimmage:
 - 1. Attendant Illegally on Field

C. 10 yards from spot of foul and repeat the down:

1. Clipping
2. Holding
3. Illegal Block
4. Flag guarding (If during an attempt by the defense to pull the flag of the ball carrier, any part of the arm or the ball impedes the flag from being pulled.)
5. Helping the Runner or Steering Blockers
6. Diving

Note: If the succeeding spot of the ball is still behind the first down line then the down will remain the same.

*Live ball penalty

D. 10 Yards:

1. Holding ball carrier (spot of foul and repeat of down or result of the play)
2. Pass Interference
3. Offensive (loss of down, from line of scrimmage)
4. Defensive* (automatic first down, from line of scrimmage)
5. Passing or Running after a Declared Punt (loss of down, from line of scrimmage)
6. Roughing the Passer or stripping the ball from passer (automatic first down, from line of scrimmage)
7. Stripping ball from runner (from spot of foul & repeat the down)
8. Pushing ball carrier (from spot of foul & repeat the down)
9. Charging/straight arm (loss of down, from the spot of the foul.)

Note: On a fourth down "loss of Down" penalty play, should the walk off of the penalty result in a succeeding spot not beyond the first down line, the defense will take possession of the ball.

E. 15 yards from line of scrimmage

1. Unnecessary Roughness
2. Unsportsmanlike Conduct
3. Pull a flag prematurely (automatic first down) **If in the opinion of the official, flags are intentionally pulled prematurely, then 15 yard penalty from the spot of the foul.*

F. Official's Discretion

1. Altering of the flag.
2. Minimum Penalty: (Ten yards, loss of down.)
3. Maximum Penalty: (Player ejection and/or forfeiture of game.)

Note: The game may be forfeited if the offending team has gained an advantage or has been previously warned.

4. No distance penalty shall exceed half the distance from the enforcement spot to the offending team's goal line.

a. When a live ball foul by one team is followed by a dead ball foul by an opponent or by the same team the penalties are administered separately and in order of occurrence

b. In the event of an inadvertent whistle during a pass, snap, or kick, the down will be automatically replayed. When a player has possession, the team may choose to take the ball at the point it was blown dead or to replay the down.

19. Special Circumstances

A. Emergencies

1. A period may be shortened in any emergency by agreement of the coaches and officials.
2. Any game interrupted by an emergency shall be continued from the point of interruption unless otherwise agreed to by the coaches and officials
3. Weather Conditions (Heat, Fire, Smoke, Rain)
4. A game may be delayed or suspended due to weather by the coaches, officials, and/or the CYO Supervisor.
5. If a game is suspended during the third quarter while one team holds a lead of twenty-five points or more the game shall be ended with the leading team declared the winner.
6. If a game is suspended during the fourth quarter while one team holds a lead of seventeen points or more the game shall be ended with the leading team declared the winner.
7. Suspended games, which do not meet the above criteria, shall be continued from the point of interruption.

20. Overly Physical Play

- A. Officials have the responsibility and discretion to manage overly physical play.
- B. Officials shall monitor the level of physicality of players, especially in games featuring mismatched teams.
- C. Officials have the discretion to enforce penalties and enact any disciplinary action against the Player(s) or Coach.
- D. The severity and frequency of overly physical contact may result in a players' ejection from the game.
- E. Any malicious act of aggression will result in the players' ejection.
- F. Disregard of Officials direction by the offending Coach or Players may result in Coach Ejection and/or forfeiture of the game.

21. VIDEOTAPING

Under no circumstance may a school administrator, Coach, student athlete or spectator visually record (regardless of the medium) a contest that does not involve their school team.

Exceptions: Competition Events