



**NCSAA 7-on-7 Flag Football
Rule Book**

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OVERVIEW

I. FORMAT

- a. Age divisions are as follows:
 - i. Recreational: Kindergarten – 2nd Grades
 - ii. Recreational: 3rd – 5th Grades
 - iii. Competitive: 3rd – 5th Grades
 - iv. Junior Varsity: 6th – 7th Grades
 - No 8th Graders may play in JV
 - v. Varsity: 6th – 8th Grades
 - Schools may only have 1 Varsity Team per sport

II. COACH AND SPECTATOR CONDUCT/RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. Coaches, family members, parents, and spectators are required to observe the game from designated areas.
- b. Coaches are permitted to coach on the sideline.
- c. Coaches must agree to sign a Coaches Code of Conduct and strictly adhere to the guidelines for coach conduct and attitude.
 - i. If a coach displays any type of negativity towards their players, coaches, or staff, the coach may be removed from the field immediately and unable to coach for the remainder of the game.
- d. All family members, parents, and spectators will observe play from the designated areas. Participants, coaches, parents, and family members must conduct themselves appropriately during the game.
- e. Inappropriate, rude, or confrontational behavior by any coach, player, family, or spectator may lead to an unsportsmanlike penalty on the team and removal of that individual(s) from the premises.
- f. Misconduct by any individual may lead to removal from the premises.

RULES

I.	GAME
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- a. At the start of each game, captains from both teams will meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who starts with the ball. The Visiting Team call the coin toss.
- b. The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense. Possession changes to start the second half to the team that started the game on defense. Teams may not defer their decision to the second half.
- c. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at the 40-yard line with their choice of hash and has three (3) plays to gain a first down. First downs will be achieved when the offensive team crosses the 25-yard line and again at the 10-yard line. From there, the offensive team has three (3) down to score a touchdown.
- d. If the offensive team fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts its drive from the 40-yard line.
- e. If the offensive team fails to achieve a first down, possession of the ball changes and the new offensive team starts its drive from the 40-yard line.
- f. All possession changes start from the 40-yard line.
- g. The second half will begin with possession for the team that began the game on defense.

II.	TERMINOLOGY
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Boundary Lines	The outer perimeter lines around the field. They include the sidelines and back of the endzone.
Charging	An illegal move by the ball-carrier directly at a defensive player who has established position on the field. This includes lowering the head or initiating contact with a shoulder, forearm, or the chest.
Dead Ball	This refers to the period of time immediately before or after a play.
Defense	The team opposing the offense to prevent them from advancing the football.
Downs (1-2-3)	The offensive team has three (3) attempts or “downs” to advance the football past the Line-To-Gain.
Flag Guarding	An illegal act by the ball-carrier to prevent a defender from pulling the ball-carrier’s flags by still arm, lowering the elbow or head, or by blocking access to the runner’s flags with a hand or arm.
Inadvertent Whistle	This is an official’s whistle that is performed in error.
Lateral	A backward or sideway toss of the football by the ball-carrier.

Line of Scrimmage (LOS)	An imaginary line running through the point of the football and across the width of the field.
Line-To-Gain	The line the offensive team must pass to get a first down or touchdown.
Live Ball	This refers to the period of time that the play is in action. Generally used in regard to penalties. Live ball penalties are considered part of the play and must be enforced before the down is considered complete.
Neutral Zone	An area the width of the football along of the Line of Scrimmage.
Offense	The team with possession of the football.
Passer	The offensive player that throws the ball and may, or may not, be the quarterback.
Rusher	The defensive player assigned to rush the quarterback to prevent them from passing the football by pulling their flags.
Shovel Pass	A legal pitch attempted from behind the LOS that is caught beyond the LOS.
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	Rude, confrontational, or offensive behavior or language.
Whistle	This is the sound made by an official using a whistle that signifies the end of the play or a stop in the action.

III. EQUIPMENT

- a. Ball size:
 - i. K-2nd: Mini Size (Martin F401, Tachikara SF2R or comparable)
 - ii. 3rd-5th: Peewee Size (Wilson K2 Comparable)
 - iii. 6th-8th: Junior Size
- b. All players must wear official NCSAA flag belts (unaltered), which will be supplied to teams, and mouth guards at all times on the playing field.
 - i. Players identified without mouth guards during play will be assessed an Illegal Procedure penalty.
 - ii. It is the players/team's responsibility to ensure that their flags are on properly and that they "point out" prior to each play.
- c. Teams will be allowed to use team balls on offense, but they must fit the size specifications and be properly inflated. These must be switched on offense quickly.
- d. Teams must wear matching jerseys during the game.
- e. Players must wear shoes. Cleats may be worn provided they do not have exposed metal.
- f. Players may tape their forearms, hands, and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads, and knee pads. Braces with exposed metal are not allowed. Hard casts are not allowed.
 - i. No type of stick-aid can be applied to the gloves or football.

- g. Players must remove all jewelry, hats, and do-rags. Winter beanies are allowed. Soft helmets are also allowed.
- h. Players' jerseys must be tucked into shorts or pants if they hang below the belt line.
- i. Shorts or pants with belt loops or pockets are not allowed. If pockets are worn, they must be taped and that is the responsibility of the player/team. They can also be turned inside out if there are no internal pockets. If pocket issues cannot be safely remedied the player will be ruled ineligible for that game.
- j. Shorts and flag belts/flags must be contrasting colors.

IV. FIELD

- a. The field will be 50 yards long with a 40-yard playing field and a 10-yard end zone. At select sites, K-2 may be reduced to 30-35 yards wide. Other divisions will be up to 53 yards wide.
- b. The field will be marked with the appropriate yardage markers.
- c. Field equipment will include a down-marker and endzone pylons.
- d. Stepping on the boundary line is considered out-of-bounds.

V. ROSTERS

- a. If available, home teams wear light color jerseys and visiting teams wear dark color jerseys.
- b. Teams must consist of at least seven (7) players.
- c. Teams must start games with a minimum of seven (7) players. In the event of an injury, a team with insufficient substitute players may play with six (6) players on the field, but no fewer than six (6).

VI. TIMING AND OVERTIME

- a. Games will consist of two (2) 20-minute halves with a 5-minute halftime period.
- b. Each team will receive two (2) 30-second timeouts per half. The timeouts do not carry over.
- c. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
- d. In the event of an injury, the clock will stop then restart once the injured player is removed from the field of play.
 - i. If the clock is stopped in this manner, the injured player must sit out at least one (1) play before returning. The coach can elect to take a charged timeout to waive this.
- e. Teams will have a 25-second play clock for each play once the Referee has blown the Ready Whistle for the offense.
- f. Each game will begin and end with a whistle.
- g. The game clock will be a running clock (stopping only for timeouts and injuries); except in the final 2-minutes of each half, where regulation timing will be used.
 - i. Referee will announce when the game clock has reached the 2-minute mark.

- h. During regulation timing, the clock will stop for all: incomplete passes, penalties, player out of bounds, and timeouts.
 - i. For offensive penalties, the clock will resume on the ready whistle.
 - ii. For defensive penalties, the clock will resume on the snap of the football.
- i. If the score is tied at the end of 40 minutes, an overtime period will be used to determine a winner. Overtime format is as follows:
 - i. A coin toss will determine the team that chooses to be on offense or defense first.
 - 1. The home team will call the toss.
 - 2. The winner of the coin toss will choose offense or defense.
 - ii. Each team will have one set of downs from the 10-yard line to attempt to score a touchdown.
 - 1. The team with the most points after each team has had a possession will be declared the winner.
 - 2. If a third overtime is needed, both teams will be required to attempt a 2-point PAT after a score.
 - iii. These formats will be repeated until a clear winner is declared.
 - iv. All regulation period rules and penalties are in effect.
 - v. There are no timeouts.

VII. SCORING

- a. Touchdown: 6 points
- b. PAT (Point After Touchdown):
 - i. 1 point: From the 5-yard line and is a Pass-Only play
 - ii. 2 points: From the 10-yard line and can be either a Run or Pass play.
- c. Overtime Tiebreaker: 1 point
- d. A team that scores a touchdown must declare whether they wish to attempt a 1-point conversion (from the 5-yard line) or a 2-point conversion (from the 10-yard line). Any change, once a decision has been announced, requires a charged timeout. A decision cannot be changed after a penalty.
- e. After one team in winning by 35 points or more, the game is over. Once a 35 or more-point advantage is gained, no PAT will be attempted. The game will continue in "scrimmage mode" for the remainder of the game (regular season only).
- f. The Referee will keep the official score and time on the field for each game.
- g. The coaches and officials must sign the scoresheet before leaving the field. If a coach does not sign the scoresheet, that will be annotated by the officials and the score will be FINAL.

VIII. COACHES

- a. There can be only one (1) offensive coach allowed on the field at any time.
- b. The coach must be positioned behind the offensive huddle, and out of the way of play.
- c. Coaches are not allowed to challenge any official ruling.
- d. Remaining team coaches must work from the sidelines.
- e. NO defensive coaches are allowed on the field at any time.
- f. Substitutions are unlimited and to be made at the coaches' discretion.
 - i. All substitutions are to be made between plays or during timeouts.
 - ii. Substitutions do not need to be acknowledged by the officials.
 - iii. The offensive team is NOT required to wait, or delay, for the defensive team to make a substitution.
- g. It is the coaches' responsibility to keep control of their sidelines. This includes coaches, players, family members, and parents.

IX. LIVE BALL/DEAD BALL

- a. The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until an official whistles the ball dead.
- b. The official will indicate the neutral zone and the line of scrimmage.
 - i. It is an automatic dead ball penalty if any player on offense or defense enters the neutral zone prior to the snap of the football. The official MAY give both teams a "courtesy" neutral zone warning to allow players to move back out of the neutral zone.
- c. A player who gains possession in the air is considered inbounds as long as one (1) foot comes down in the field of play prior to any other part of the player touching an out of bounds area.
- d. The defense may not mimic the offensive team signals by trying to confuse the offensive players. While the quarterback is calling out signals to start the play. This will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.
- e. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
- f. Any official can whistle the play dead.
- g. Play is ruled "dead" when:
 - i. The ball hits the ground as a result of a bad snap, the ball is then placed where the ball hit the ground.
 - ii. The ball-carrier's flag is pulled.
 - iii. The ball-carrier steps out of bounds.
 - iv. A touchdown or PAT is scored.
 - v. The ball-carrier's knee or arm hits the ground.
 - vi. The ball-carrier's flag falls out.
 - vii. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one (1) or no flag(s).
 - viii. The 5-second pass clock expired.
 - ix. Inadvertent whistle.

Note: There are no fumbles. The ball will be spotted where the ball-carrier's front most foot was at the time of the fumble.

- h. If an inadvertent whistle occurs with no time left on the clock at halftime or the end of the game, the offense will have one (1) untimed down. The offense has two (2) options:
 - i. Take the ball where it was when the whistle was blown, and the down is consumed.
 - ii. Replay the down from the previous line of scrimmage.
- i. Players may not intentionally kick the football.

X. RUNNING

- a. The ball is spotted where the ball-carrier's front most foot is when their flag is pulled; not where the football is held. Forward progress is measured based on the front most foot.
- b. **The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball.** The quarterback is defined as the offensive player who received the snap from the center.
- c. Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Handoffs may be in front, behind, or to the side of the offensive player, but must be behind the line of scrimmage. The offense may use multiple handoffs.
 - i. The "Center Sneak" play is not allowed. The quarterback is not allowed to handoff to the center of the first handoff of the play.
 - ii. The offensive team may run the ball on any down (unless they begin inside the 10-yard line).
- d. Absolutely NO laterals of any kind are allowed.
- e. The area inside the 10-yard line is designated as a no-run zone. Any play beginning in this area MUST be a pass play.
- f. Any player who receives a handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- g. Once the ball has been handed off in front, behind, or to the side of the quarterback, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- h. Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping, or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding.
 - i. Runners may leave their feet if there is a clear indication that they have done so to avoid a collision with another player without a flag guarding penalty being enforced.
- i. Spinning is allowed; however, players cannot leave their feet to avoid a flag pull.
 - i. Players spinning out of control will be called for flag guarding.
- j. No blocking or screening is allowed at any time.
- k. Offensive players without the ball must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. No running with the ball-carrier.
- l. All jerseys MUST be tucked in before each play begins. The flags must be on the players hips and free from obstruction. Obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.

XI. PASSING

- a. All passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage.
 - i. All passes that do not cross the line of scrimmage, whether received or not, are illegal forward passes.
 - ii. The quarterback may throw the ball away to avoid a sack; however, that pass must go beyond the line of scrimmage.
- b. Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
- c. The quarterback has a five-second “pass clock”. If a pass is not thrown within the five (5) seconds, the play is dead, the down is consumed, and the ball is returned to the previous line of scrimmage. Once a ball is handed off, the 5-second pass clock is no longer in effect.
- d. The offensive team is responsible to retrieving and returning the football to the officials. The clock does not stop, and any delay of the offense in retrieving and returning the football to the officials will result in a Dead Ball Delay of Game penalty.

XII. RECEIVING

- a. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
- b. Only one player is allowed in motion at the snap of the football. All motion must be parallel to, or away from, the line of scrimmage. No motion at the snap may “attack” or approach the line of scrimmage.
- c. A player must have at least one (1) foot inbounds when making a reception.
- d. In the case of simultaneous reception by both an offensive player and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
- e. Interceptions change the possession of the ball back to the original 40-yard line.
 - i. Interceptions cannot be returned for yardage.
- f. Defensive pass interference that occurs in the endzone will result in an automatic 1st down with the football being placed on the 1-Yard line.

XIII. RUSHING THE PASSER

- a. Each team is allowed one (1) blitz per half.
 - i. The blitzes do not carry over.
 - ii. After the team’s blitz, the official’s will annotate the scorecards to reflect that it has been used.
- b. If a team blitzes more than once per half, they will be penalized 5-yards for illegal rush.
- c. Teams are not required to identify their rushers before the play.
- d. When blitzing, teams may blitz any number of defenders.
- e. Once the ball is handed off, the 5-second rule is no longer in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.

- f. A team's blitz may be used if any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage prior to the ball being passed or handed off.
 - i. An area affected by this is defensive backs who crowd the line of scrimmage. If they cross it at any point they could be charged with a rush or penalty, depending on the specific game situation.
- g. Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however, contact to the QB, unless ruled incidental by the official, would result in a roughing the passer penalty.
- h. The offense cannot block, or impede, the defensive rusher in any way.
- i. A sack occurs if the quarterback's flag is pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball is placed where the quarterback's front most foot is at the time the flag was pulled.

XIV. FLAG PULLING

- a. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball-carrier is in full possession of the ball.
- b. Defenders can dive to pull flags; however, they cannot tackle, hold, or run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.
- c. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball-carrier's possession at any time.
- d. If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during the play, the player is down where the flag came off (ball-carrier) or where the player gains possession of the ball and the play ends. The ball is placed where the flag lands or the play ended.
- e. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball.
- f. Flag guarding is an attempt to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the head, hand, football, arm, or shoulder, or intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey.

XV. FORMATIONS

- a. Offenses must have a minimum of one (1) player on the line of scrimmage (the center) and up to six (6) players on the line of scrimmage. The quarterback must be off of the line of scrimmage.
- b. Teams may shift as many players as they want; however, only one (1) player may be in motion at the snap of the football.
 - i. No motion is allowed toward the line of scrimmage.
- c. Movement by a player who is set or a player who runs toward the line of scrimmage while in motion is considered a false start.
- d. The center must snap the football with a rapid and continuous motion between their legs to a player in the backfield, and the football must completely leave their hands.

XVI. UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

- a. If the officials witness any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player may be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the Referee's discretion. No appeals will be considered. FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.
- b. Offensive or confrontational language is not allowed. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive language or confrontational language occurs, the Referee may give one (1) warning. If it continues, or is overly egregious, the individuals will be ejected from the game and they must leave the premises.
- c. Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach, or official.
- d. **Fighting will not be tolerated!** If a player throws a punch, they will be immediately ejected and CANNOT return to the game. If players are involved in pushing/shoving they will be immediately ejected and CANNOT return to the game. If a team's bench clears, resulting in a fight, both of the teams will be ejected, resulting in a forfeit. The Referee has the right to eject any player, players, or team out of the game. The ejected player, players, or team must leave the premises immediately. A Referee can also assess a 10-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.
- e. Ball-carriers MUST make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.
- f. Defenders are not allowed to run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.
- g. Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship.
 - i. Yell to cheer on your players, not to harass officials or other teams.
 - ii. Keep comments clean and profanity free.
 - iii. Compliment ALL players, not just one (1) player or team.
- h. Fans are required to keep fields safe and kid friendly.
 - i. Keep younger kids and equipment (such as coolers, chairs, and tents) far enough off of the field as to create a safe playing area for all players.
 - ii. Dispose of all trash in designated trash cans.
- i. Unsportsmanlike conduct penalties:
 - i. Defensive: +10-yards from the line of scrimmage and an automatic first down.
 - ii. Offensive: -10-yards from the line of scrimmage and a loss of down.

XVII. PENALTIES

- a. General
 - i. The Referee will announce all penalties.
 - ii. Officials determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
 - iii. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted (Spot Fouls).

- iv. Only the team captain or head coach may ask the Referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players may not question calls.
- v. Games may not end on a defensive penalty unless the offensive team declines it.
- vi. Penalties are assessed Live Ball then Dead Ball. Live ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered complete.
- vii. Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.
- viii. An Illegal Procedure penalty may also be used for any play/action not specifically specified in the rule book that goes against the integrity of the football game. This is at the sole discretion of the Referee and can be used on any play in which is deemed not in the best interest of the game.

b. Defensive Spot Fouls

Defensive Pass Interference	Automatic First Down
Holding	+5 Yards/Automatic 1 st Down
Stripping	+10 Yards/Automatic 1 st Down

c. Offensive Spot Fouls

Charging	-10 Yards/Consumption of Down
Flag Guarding	-10 Yards/Consumption of Down
Screening, Blocking, or Running with the Ball-Carrier	-10 Yards/Consumption of Down

d. Defensive Penalties (Assessed from LOS)

Defensive Unnecessary Roughness	+10 Yards/Automatic 1 st Down
Defensive Unsportsmanlike Conduct	+10 Yards/Automatic 1 st Down
Illegal Flag Pull	+5 Yards/Automatic 1 st Down
Illegal Rush	+5 Yards/Automatic 1 st Down
Offsides	+5 Yards/Automatic 1 st Down
Roughing the Passer	+5 Yards/Automatic 1 st Down
Taunting	+5 Yards/Automatic 1 st Down

e. Offensive Penalties (Assessed from LOS)

Delay of Game (25 Second Play Clock)	-5 Yards/Consumption of Down
Delay of Game (Fail to Retrieve/Return Ball)	-5 Yards
Illegal Forward Pass	-5 Yards/Consumption of Down
Illegal Motion	-5 Yards/Consumption of Down
Illegal Procedure	-5 Yards/Consumption of Down

Offensive Pass Interference	-5 Yards/Consumption of Down
Offensive Unnecessary Roughness	-10 Yards/Consumption of Down
Offensive Unsportsmanlike Conduct	-10 Yards/Consumption of Down
Offsides/False Start	-5 Yards/Consumption of Down

XVIII. NATIONAL SPORTS ID

- a. National Sports ID Requirements to be completed and approved by deadline.
 - 1. **Headshot Photo** – *Similar to a Driver’s License or Student ID Photo. This should be a close-up, clearly lit photo that shows the student-athlete’s entire face and hair looking directly at the camera. No hats. No sunglasses. This can be a recent school photo or one simply taken from your cell phone.*
 - 2. **Scan of Birth Certificate, State ID, or Passport**
 - 3. **Proof of Grade** – *This can be your most recent report card, most recent School ID, school schedule showing your child’s grade, screen shot of Online Account (i.e. Infinite Campus) proving grade level, etc.*
 - 4. **Proof of Physical** – *You may provide a Doctor’s Note or use the NCSAA Physical Form.*
 - 5. **E-Sign NCSAA Participant Waivers**
 - 6. **Pay \$10 National Sports ID fee per student-athlete**

XIX. TEAMS DROPPING

All teams dropped after the deadline will be charged the FULL Season fees. If the schedule is yet to be released, the team will remain on the schedule for the Season and games will be treated as a forfeit.

XX. REVIEW OF OFFICIALS

Officials decisions are final on the game field. NCSAA will not overturn an official’s decision. There are no “protests” or reviews of games. However, Coaches/AD’s may submit a review of the game official at ncaasports.com.

XXI. PLAYOFFS AND CONSOLATION GAMES

- a. The Regular Season will consist of a 7 game Season. The top 8 teams will move on to a single elimination tournament. All other teams will play in 1 consolation game against a like opponent to end the Season. If there are 8 or less teams in a division, all teams will make the playoffs.
- b. Additional Playoff Rules
 - i. Players must have checked in for at least 4 games to participate in playoffs. They must be listed on the official roster for at least 4 weeks of the season.
 - ii. Teams must have 6 players to compete in tournament match.
 - iii. Standings are to be determined by the following
 - 1. Standings
 - 2. Head to head
 - 3. Points allowed
 - 4. Coin Flip