



GRADE SCHOOL FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

All games will be governed by the 2017-2018 NIRSA Flag & Touch Football Rules Book with the following CYS modifications:

Section 1: THE GAME, FIELD, PLAYERS, AND EQUIPMENT

Each participant must be a registered student of the school and in good academic standing to be eligible to participate.

1. The game shall be played between two teams of 7 players each. Each team must have a minimum of 5 players to begin a game.
2. Due to injury, a team may continue a game with less than the minimum number of required players. An ejection that leaves a team with less than the minimum number of required players will result in a forfeit by that team.
3. Pee Wee sized football shall be used for all grade school divisions. A game ball will be provided for each game or teams may choose to provide their own.
4. Each team is must wear the same shirts of one distinguishable color. Any player not dressed in like shirts may not participate. Flag belts will be provided for each team. **Players must wear shorts or pants without belt loops or pockets.** Shorts with pockets may not be turned inside-out or taped. Shorts or pants must be of a different color than the flag belts worn. Suggest players were navy or black shorts.
5. **Shoes:** Regulation rubber-soled cleats, plastic cleats, and tennis shoes are the only permissible footwear. Players may not play barefoot. No combat boots or hiking boots may be worn. No steel cleats or shoes with steel or rubber detachable cleats that screw onto the shoes may be worn.
6. Players may wear soft, pliable pads or braces on the leg, knee, and/or ankle. Braces made of any hard material must be covered with at least one-half inch padding for safety reasons. Elbow pads are not permitted.
7. Tape or bandages of the hand, wrist, forearm, or elbow are prohibited except to protect an injury. Under no circumstances will a player wearing a cast or splint be permitted to play. Players may wear a face shield molded to the face with no protrusions to protect against a facial injury. If eyeglasses are worn, they must be unbreakable. Each player is responsible for the safety of his/her own glasses.
8. **Foreign Substance:** Any slippery or sticky substance of a foreign nature on equipment, clothing, or an exposed part of the body is illegal.
9. **Jewelry:** No jewelry or any other item deemed dangerous by the official may be worn except for Medic Alert Labels that must be worn inside the jersey and taped to the body or under a cloth wrist band.
10. **Headwear and Gloves:** Players may wear a knit or stocking cap (no caps with bills) and/or soft, pliable, non-abrasive gloves. Bandanas which are tied with a knot are not permitted.
11. Shirts must be tucked into the shorts or pants and flag belts must remain outside of the shirt/jersey during play.

Section 2: DEFINITIONS

1. Flag Belt Removal: When the flag belt is clearly taken from the ball carrier (flag belt is detached), the ball is declared dead. The player who removes the flag belt should immediately hold the belt above his/her head to assist the officials. If a flag belt inadvertently falls to the ground, a one-hand touch between the shoulders and knees constitutes capture. A runner is also down if any part of that runner touches the ground other than the feet, hands, or the ball while in the hand of the runner.

2. Scrimmage Line:

A. Offensive scrimmage line – Red Yard Marker.

B. Defensive scrimmage line – Yellow Yard Marker.

C. Minimum line players - The offensive team must have at least 4 players on the offensive line of scrimmage at the snap. The remaining players must either be on their scrimmage line or behind their backfield line. A player in motion is not counted as one of the minimum number of players on the scrimmage line.

3. Penalties:

A. Penalty Accepted - the down shall remain the same unless otherwise specified by the rules regarding change of team possession, penalty enforcement, or the ball is left beyond the zone line to gain.

B. Penalty Declined - the number of the next down shall be whatever it would have been if that foul had not occurred.

Section 3: PERIODS, TIME FACTORS, AND SUBSTITUTIONS

1. All games will consist of four (4) ten-minute quarters with a running clock. The clock will stop during the last two (2) minutes of the second quarter and fourth quarter on dead balls. Teams will switch directions at the end of the first, second and third quarters.



2. **Game time is forfeit time.** Teams must gather at game field for pre-game league prayer.
3. The winner of the coin toss shall have the option starting on offense or defense, defending a goal, or deferring the options until the second half. The remaining options shall be given to the opposing captain. Play starts at the beginning of each half with **the ball placed on the offensive/receiving team's 14-yard line.**
4. **Mercy Rule:** If a team is 35 or more points ahead at any time after halftime, or if a team is 19 or more points at any point with 2 minutes left in the 4th quarter, the team leading should limit their plays to running plays in keeping with the Code of Conduct.
5. **Timeouts:** Each team is permitted one (1) timeouts per half. Timeouts do not carry over from the first or second half or overtime. A timeout shall not exceed one (1) minute. The clock stops during all timeouts.
6. **Overtime:** There is no overtime in grade school flag football. Games can end in a tie.
7. **Delay of Game:** After a ball is declared ready for play, the offensive team has twenty-five (25) seconds to put the ball in play. Penalty: Delay of game, 5 yards. The official may order the clock to be stopped/started when, in his/her opinion, either team is trying to conserve or consume playing time using tactics deemed to be unfair in said official's judgment.
8. **Substitutions:**
 - A. Substitutions are allowed at any time that the ball is dead, but games must not be delayed by them. Each substitute shall be in uniform and ready for play with flags in position.
 - B. Substitutions used with the obvious attempt to confuse or deceive the opposing team will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.
9. A half may be extended by an untimed down when, during the last timed down, there was a foul by either team and the penalty is accepted, there was a double foul, there was an inadvertent whistle, or there was a touchdown scored.

Section 4: BALL IN PLAY, DEAD BALL, OUT OF BOUNDS

1. The offense must snap the ball within 25 seconds after the referee has put the ball in play (sounding whistle and dropping hand). One coach for each team may remain on the field, but cannot obstruct the play or vision of a player. Should an obstruction by a coach occur, a 10-yard penalty shall be imposed on the offending coach.
2. Ball declared dead:
 - A. When a forward pass strikes the ground or is caught simultaneously by opposing players.
 - B. When a backward pass or fumble by a player strikes the ground.
 - C. When a runner has a flag belt removed legally by a defensive player.
 - D. When a runner is legally touched with one hand between the shoulders and knees, including the hand and arm, once the flag belt is no longer attached.
 - E. When a snap hits the ground.
 - F. When a muff of a free or protected scrimmage kick strikes the ground.
 - G. When the passer is de-flagged before releasing the ball.
 - H. When a punt breaks the plane of the receiving team's goal line.
 - I. When the defensive team secures possession during a Try or in overtime.
3. **Fumbles:** A fumble or backward pass is dead at the point it hits the ground. The ball goes to the team that last had possession. Just touching the ball is not sufficient for legal possession. A fumble by the offense into the opposing team's end zone will result in a touchback.
4. **Out-of-Bounds:** A ball in player possession is out-of-bounds when either the ball or any part of the runner touches the ground or anything else, except a player or game official, which is on or outside a boundary line. If the runner in-bounds bumps into or is touched by player or an official on the sidelines out-of-bounds, the ball is still in play.

Section 5: SERIES OF DOWNS AND LINE TO GAIN

1. **Series of Downs:** A team in possession of the ball shall have four (4) consecutive downs to advance to the next zone line to gain.
2. **Zone Line to Gain:** The zone line to gain in any series shall be the zone in advance of the ball, unless distance has been lost due to penalty or failure to gain. In such case, the original zone in advance of the ball at the beginning of the series of downs is the zone line to gain. The zones formed by the marking of the twenty and forty-yard lines are used to determine the distance to be gained. The zone distance may be modified based on a venue, but must be equal distance from goal line to center line of the field in use. The most forward point of the ball, when declared dead between the zone lines, shall be the determining factor.
3. **Incorrect Down:** The Referee shall have authority to rectify an error until the series has ended.



Section 6: PUNTING THE BALL

1. No punts. On a change of possession because of downs the ball shall be placed on the opposing side 14-yard mark.

Section 7: SNAPPING AND PASSING THE BALL

1. The ball must be snapped backwards and off the ground. The ball need not be snapped between the center's legs, but the center cannot have his/her feet over the scrimmage line. In a legal snap, the movement must be a quick and continuous motion of the hand or hands backwards. Once the ball leaves the ground, the defense may rush.
2. The player who receives the ball must be at least two (2) yards behind the offensive scrimmage line. This does include the quarterback.
3. Any time at or after the ball is ready for play, each offensive player must momentarily be within fifteen (15) yards of the ball before the snap.
4. The offensive team needs the snapper on line of scrimmage at the snap.
5. **Offensive Player in Motion:** One offensive player may be in motion, but not in motion toward the opponent's goal line. Such a player must be behind the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. A player in motion is not counted as one of the 4 or 5 players on the scrimmage line. Only one offensive player may be in motion at a given time. Penalty: Illegal motion, 5 yards from the previous spot. Other offensive players may not draw the defense offsides.
6. **Fumbles:**
 - A. A backward pass or fumble which touches the ground between the goal lines is dead immediately at the spot where the ball hits the ground and belongs to the team last in possession unless lost on downs.
 - B. Out of Bounds - A backward pass or fumble going out of bounds between the goal lines remains in possession of the fumbling team at the out of bounds spot. If out of bounds behind the goal line, it is a touchback or safety.
7. **Encroachment:** After the snapper has made his/her final adjustment of the ball, it is encroachment for any player to break the plane of his/her scrimmage line (Exception: the snapper/center has the right to be over the ball.) Penalty: Encroachment, 5 yards from the previous spot.
8. Offensive players are responsible for retrieving the ball after each scrimmage down. The snapper will bring the ball from the huddle to the scrimmage line (first ball spotter - orange). A towel may be used to help keep the ball dry and must be placed behind the deepest offensive player at the start of each play from scrimmage.
9. All offensive players must be motionless for one second preceding the snap, except for a (one) player moving parallel to or away from the scrimmage line. Penalty: Illegal motion, 5 yards from the previous spot.
10. An offensive player that shifts (other than going legally in motion) must stop for one full second before the snap. Penalty: Illegal shift, 5 yards from the previous spot.
11. A player may hand the ball forward or backward at any time while behind the line of scrimmage.
12. **Forward Pass:** All players are eligible to touch or catch a pass. During a scrimmage down and before team possession has changed, a forward pass may be thrown provided the passer's feet are behind the offensive scrimmage line when the ball leaves the passer's hand. Only one (1) forward pass can be thrown per down.
13. A forward pass is completed when caught by a member of the passing team in bounds. A forward pass is intercepted when caught by a member of the opposing team in bounds. It is counted as a completion or interception if the first part of the person to make contact with the ground after the catch, usually one foot, touches in bounds.
14. A forward pass is illegal:
 - A. If the passer's foot is beyond Team A's scrimmage line (orange ball spotter) when the ball leaves his/her hand.
 - B. If thrown after team possession has changed during the down.
 - C. If intentionally grounded to save a loss of yardage.
 - D. If a passer catches his/her untouched forward pass.
 - E. If it is the second forward pass during a down.Penalty: Illegal forward pass, 5 yards from the spot, loss of down, if prior to change of possession.
15. After the ball is snapped, and until it has been touched, there shall be no offensive pass interference beyond the offensive scrimmage line when the legal forward pass crosses the offensive scrimmage line (orange ball spotter). Penalty: 10 yards from the previous spot and loss of down.
16. After a legal forward pass is released by the passer and until it is touched, there shall be no defensive pass interference beyond Team A's scrimmage line while the ball is in flight which crosses the Team A scrimmage line. Penalty: 10 yards from the dead ball spot and automatic first down.
17. **Simultaneous Catch:** If a forward pass is caught simultaneously by members of opposing teams, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the team that snapped the ball at the spot of the catch.



Section 8: SCORING PLAYS

1. **Touchdown Values:** All touchdowns are six (6) points. The player scoring the touchdown must raise his/her arms, so the nearest official can de-flag the player. If the official determines that the flag belt has been secured illegally, the touchdown is disallowed. The player is disqualified, and a penalty will result.
2. **Try for 1, 2, or 3:** *An opportunity to score one (1) point from the 3-yard line, two (2) points from the 10-yard line, or three (3) points from the 20-yard line by running or passing only shall be granted the team scoring a touchdown.* Once the offensive captain has declared his/her choice (try for 1, 2, or 3) he/she may change the decision only when a charged timeout for either team is taken. A team's choice cannot be changed if a penalty should occur. If the defensive team intercepts a pass or fumble during the try, that try shall be over.
3. **Safety:** A safety results when a runner carries the ball from the field of play to or across his/her own goal line, and it becomes dead there in his/her team's possession. A safety results in two (2) points for the defensive team.

Section 9: BLOCKING, RUSHING, AND CONDUCT

1. **Offensive Screen Blocking:** Screen blocking is permitted and shall take place without contact. The screen blocker shall have his/her hands and arms at his/her side or behind his/her back. Any use of the hands, arms, legs, elbows, or body to initiate contact by an offensive player is illegal. A player must be on his/her feet before, during, and after screen blocking.
2. Defensive players must go around the offensive player's screen block. The arms, hands and legs may not be used as a wedge to contact the opponent.
3. **Player Restrictions:**
 - A. No player shall make contact with an opponent which is deemed unnecessary.
 - B. There shall be no clipping or tripping.
 - C. There shall be no bumping the receiver. The defensive player must play the ball and shall not interfere with a receiver. However, defensive and offensive players are equally entitled to a passed ball.
 - D. Pulling or removing the flag belt from an offensive player as the ball is snapped or before a pass reception with the obvious intent of confusing the offensive player as an eligible pass receiver or ball carrier is illegal.
 - E. A defensive player may not bump or push a runner out of bounds.
 - F. Offensive charging is not permitted. The ball carrier may not run through a defensive player but must attempt to evade the defensive player. There is no spinning and no jumping.
 - G. The ball carrier shall not guard his/her flags by blocking with hands or the ball, thereby denying an opponent the opportunity to pull or remove the flag belt. Penalty: Flag guarding, 10 yards from the spot of the foul.
 - H. Stiff arming by the ball carrier is illegal. Holding or swinging the arm near the flag to ward off attempts to seize the flag is illegal and results in flag guarding.
 - I. Defensive players may not steal or strip the ball from an offensive player once he/she has control.
 - J. The flag belt is to be fastened around the waist by use of the end clip. Any tampering to secure the flags so as to make them more difficult to pull is illegal and will result in ejection from the game. Penalty: Unsportsmanlike conduct, 10 yards from the previous spot, loss of down, and player disqualification.
 - K. Players, coaches, and spectators are to position themselves between the 20-yard line markers on their team's respective sideline.
4. **Pass Interference:** Once a pass is in the air, the ball belongs to anyone who can get it. Any contact which occurs between two or more players making a legal attempt to catch or bat the pass is considered incidental. Screening a player's eyes or waving the hands or arms in his/her face to distract a receiver is considered interference.
5. **Rushing the Passer:** Player(s) rushing the passer must be at least five yards from the line of scrimmage. Non-rushers may be at the line of scrimmage. Officials shall mark the rush line with yellow cone marker. (5-yard penalty).
6. **Roughing the Passer:** Defensive players must make a definite effort to avoid charging into a passer after the ball has been thrown. No defensive player shall contact the passer. Penalty: Roughing the Passer on a completed forward pass: 10 yards enforced from the dead ball spot when the run ends beyond A's scrimmage (Automatic 1st down) line and no change of possession has occurred.
6. **Personal Fouls:** There shall be no personal fouls committed by players, substitutes, or coaches. Personal fouls include: Using fist, foot, knee, or leg to contact an opponent; tackling the ball player (disqualification); illegal contact; unnecessary roughness, hurdling, roughing the passer (when the defender contacts any part of the passer during his/her motion or follow through).
7. The third unsportsmanlike foul by the same team results in their forfeiture of the game.



Section 10: ENFORCEMENT OF PENALTIES

1. Penalty Enforcement at the basic spot:
 - A. Pass play or during the protected scrimmage kick (before possession is gained) – basic enforcement spot is the scrimmage line (where ball was snapped).
2. On all running plays - basic enforcement spot is the end of the run.
3. All fouls are marked from the basic enforcement spot (Exception: An offensive foul behind the basic enforcement spot which becomes a spot foul.)
4. The only exception to the above regulations is Roughing the Passer; this penalty will be added on to the end result of the play.
5. Dead Ball Fouls:
 - A. Where there are 10-yard dead ball fouls committed by each team prior to the penalty administration, each 10-yard foul will cancel a 10-yard foul on the other team. Any remaining 10-yard fouls will be enforced.
 - B. 5-yard dead ball fouls will be enforced and in the order of occurrence and would never cancel a 10-yard foul.



