

CITY OF SANTA CLARITA
ADULT FLAG FOOTBALL LEAGUE
RULE BOOK



I. BASIC CONCEPT OF THE GAME

The basic concept for the game of Flag Football is for the ball carrier to avoid bodily contact with the defensive player. The defense should attempt to remove the ball carrier's flag.

II. TEAM MANAGEMENT, ROSTERS, AND ELIGIBILITY

- A. Team managers are responsible for the enforcement of and adherence to all eligibility requirements.
- B. Players must be at least eighteen (18) years of age to a play.
- C. All players must be in compliance with waiver of liability requirements in order to participate in league activity.
- D. A roster check will be completed for both teams for all championship games. All players must present a picture ID to staff prior to taking the field.
- E. Players may only play for one team per night. The player is only considered to be legitimate with the team they are rostered with. Any player who plays for another team in the same league (night) will be suspended from playing in any and all league games for a one-week period (seven (7) days). Cancelled games will not count towards suspension time served.
 - If a player plays on more than one team in any given league, in which they are not on the roster, that team is subject to forfeiting the game in which said player participated.
 - If the player is found on two or more rosters/teams on the same night, he/she may not play for both teams, that player is to commit to one team only.
- F. A team found to be playing with suspended, illegal, or ineligible players, may forfeit all games in which said player(s) participated.

III. REGULATION AND RULES OF PLAY

Conduct of Players, Managers, and Spectators

The referee is a representative of the City of Santa Clarita. No player, team manager, or spectator shall lay a hand upon, shove, strike, verbally abuse, or threaten a referee. The referee has the power to order any individual(s) out of the park; if not complied with, the game shall be forfeited, and/or the Sheriff's Department will be called. Should a player, manager and/or spectator be ejected from the game because of the Unsportsmanlike conduct, he/she may not be allowed to play/attend the next game, or possibly any remaining games, said individual is scheduled to participate in. Failure to abide by the Codes of Conduct or any serious violation of the rules and guidelines may result in the suspension or termination as a participant.

A. RULES OF PLAY

1. Equipment

- a. Tennis shoes, basketball shoes, or rubber molded cleat shoes must be worn. Metal spikes and shoes with removable spikes are prohibited.
- b. NO hard surface padding such as shoulder pads, elbow pads, hip pads, rip pads on arms, or helmets may be worn. If worn, kneepads must be worn underneath outer clothing. Players with hard casts will not be eligible to participate. Players wearing soft casts must have league approval to participate. Jewelry, including earrings and/or any hard clip **must** be removed before the start of the game. Baseball type hats are allowed to be worn, but must be worn backwards.
- c. **Players are required to wear either dark or light colored team jerseys. If teams are both wearing jerseys that are similar in color the visiting team on the schedule will be required to wear pennies (pennies provided by the Adult Sports Office).**
- d. All shirts/jerseys MUST be tucked in.
- e. Player's may not have the same color vertical stripe as the flags being worn.
- f. Friction-type belts and flags shall be provided and may not be altered by teams in any way.
- g. Regulation sized footballs must be used. Game balls are provided by the league, however teams may choose to use their own ball while on offense. Any ball not provided by the league must be approved by officials prior to the start of the game.

2. Players

- a. Both offense and defense will consist of 7 players.
- b. Teams will be allowed to have 20 max players on their team's roster. Add/Drops can be done up

until the fourth week of the season at the discretion of City Staff.

3. Grace Period, Game Fees, & Forfeits

- a. All games shall start at the scheduled starting time. Teams must have a minimum of 6 players to begin a game. In the event either team has less than 4 players ready to play, a 10-minute running clock grace period from the official starting time will be permitted for such team to field 4 players to begin the game. Game time will **NOT** be added back to the clock. If said team cannot field the minimum required players within the grace period, the game shall be forfeited to the other team. If neither team can field the minimum required players within the grace period, a double forfeit shall be declared. Games will not be rescheduled.
- b. Game fees are \$34 cash per team per game to be paid on the field to the officials.
- c. If your team is unable to show up for any scheduled game, you will lose by forfeit and a loss will be recorded in the standings. **Any team that forfeits a game is responsible for paying the total officials fee of \$60 cash.** This fee must be paid to the Adult Sports Office prior to your next scheduled game.

4. Insurance.

- a. No participant or manager will be covered by the City of Santa Clarita insurance.

5. Rain-out Policy.

- a. On game day if conditions are questionable, league participants may call the Adult Sports Information Line at 661-290-2245, to find out game status. Game status will be left on the recording by 5:00 p.m.
- b. Games cancelled due to inclement weather and/or field conditions will be rescheduled if time permits.

6. Playing Field.

- a. The dimensions of the flag football field are 40 yards by 80 yards, with No-Running Zones 5-yards before each End Zone.
- b. The first down line is designated every 20 yards.
- c. Each end zone will be 10 yards.

7. Inadvertent Whistle.

- a. In the case of an inadvertent whistle the offense will have the option to either take the result of the play at the point of the blown whistle, or replay the down. *Note: If an inadvertent whistle occurs after an interception the intercepting team will receive the result of the play at the time of the whistle.*
- b. If an inadvertent whistle occurs while the ball is in the air, the down will be replayed regardless of the outcome.

B. TIMING, TIE GAMES, SUBSTITUTIONS, MERCY

1. Timing.

- a. The referee is responsible for time keeping (starting/stopping the clock) in all games in all situations.
- b. Game consists of two (2) twenty (20) minute run time halves.
- c. Each time the ball is spotted the offensive team has 30 seconds to snap the ball.
- d. During the last one (1) minute of the first half and the last two (2) minutes of the second half the clock will stop on incomplete passes, penalties, plays that end out of bounds, scoring plays, timeouts, possession changes and on first downs (after a first down the clock will run after the official places the ball). However, the clock will not stop running if one team is ahead by 21 points or more (second half).
- e. If a player is hurt, the player must come out for one play and the injury will be an official time out.
- f. There shall be three (3) minutes between the first and second halves.
- g. A half cannot end on a defensive penalty.
- h. At the request of any player or coach to the official, 2 one-minute timeouts are allowed to each team in each half. Time outs cannot be accumulated/rolled over. In overtime (playoffs only) each team

will have one timeout.

2. Tie Games.

- a. There is NO overtime during regular season games. If there is a tie at the end of a PLAYOFF game both teams will have one offensive series to score from midfield. This process will repeat until the tie is broken. If game is still tied after 1 round of overtime play, both teams must go for 2-point conversions.

3. Substitutions.

- a. Players may make substitutions during stoppage of play, time outs, in-between quarters, and for extra point conversions.

4. Mercy Rules

- a. A mercy shall be declared during the course of a game under these circumstances: an opposing team has a point differential of 34+ points at the half, or if there is a 21+ point difference in the final two minutes.

C. BALL IN PLAY, DOWNS, PUNTS, AND DEAD BALL

1. Putting the Ball in Play, Pre-Snap, & Players in motion

- a. The winner of a pre-game coin toss will choose possession in the first or second half or field direction. If a team chooses to start with the ball in the first half, the opposing team will start with the ball in the second half. **No exceptions.**
- b. All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5 yard line.
- c. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four (4) plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has four (4) plays to score a touchdown. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on its own 5-yard line.
- d. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its 5-yard line.
- e. Prior to the ball being snapped offensive players must be in a set position (exception – one player may be in motion as the ball is snapped, but said player must be moving laterally or backwards. A penalty will be called if the player in motion is moving forward toward the line of scrimmage).
- f. The ball may be snapped by the center through the legs or by an underhand toss.
- g. A defensive player cannot intentionally draw an offensive player off-side by jabbing his foot, or any other similar method.

2. Running.

- a. "No-running zones," located 5 yards from each end zone, are designed to avoid all running situations. When in the "No-run zone" for a play to be considered a forward pass, the receiver must catch the ball beyond the line of scrimmage. Forward passes behind the line of scrimmage are prohibited in the "No-run zone". **Note: Once a ball is spotted in the no-run zone, it will continue to be a no-run situation for the remainder of the 4-down series, regardless of penalties or any other loss of yardage resulting from play.**
- b. The player who takes the handoff or receives the ball via lateral pass from behind the line of scrimmage can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- c. Once the ball is handed off, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- d. The ball spot will be determined by where the ball position was when the flag was pulled.
- e. The ball-carrier is not allowed to dive, charge, or hurdle. Diving will result in a 5-yard spot foul. Charging/hurdling will result in a 15-yard unnecessary roughness penalty.
- f. The offense will be limited to only 1 run in each series of downs. This limit is reset on each first down.

3. Receiving.

- a. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage). Lateral passes are permitted limitless times, anywhere on the field. Offensive players may run down field with the ball carrier as long as they are not hindering the progress of any defender, or their opportunity to pull the ball carrier's flag.
- b. A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.
- c. If any part of the receiver's body is out of bounds, while attempting to make a catch, the play is dead.
- d. A receiver who willingly runs out of bounds cannot be the first person to touch the ball.
- e. Pass interference is called on either team when any player movement beyond the line of scrimmage significantly hinders the progress of an eligible player's opportunity to catch the ball.

4. Passing.

- a. The quarterback has a five-second "pass clock." If a pass is not thrown within five seconds, the play is ruled dead with a loss of down. Once the ball is handed off, the five second rule is no longer in effect.
- b. **No quarterback runs.**
- c. No intentional grounding: A pass that does not cross the line of scrimmage and/or a pass that is not within the vicinity of a receiver when avoiding a sack.
- d. All forward passes must be made with both feet behind the line of scrimmage.
- e. Only one forward pass permitted per play.
- f. To avoid a sack, the quarterback must release the ball before their flag is pulled.

5. Punting.

- a. The term "punt" refers to the team's decision to avoid a 4th down play, and in return place the ball on the opposing team's 5-yard line. This will allow offenses to trade possession for a better field position for their defense.
- b. NOTE: The ball will not be physically kicked and received by a punt return team.

6. Dead and Live Ball.

- a. In all cases, after the ball hits the ground, the ball is ruled DEAD. The ball shall be put in play where the ball hits the ground; except when the ball is tossed forward by the ball carrier, then the ball shall be put in play where the ball carrier lost possession.
- b. The "Spot" of the ball will be determined by where the ball was when the player's flag was pulled.
- c. The ball is dead when a ball carrier goes out of bounds. The ball is also dead when a ball carrier's knee, forearm, elbow, bottom, head, or shoulder hits the ground.

D. SCORING.

1. Touchdowns and Extra Points

- a. A touchdown shall be 6 points. A conversion from the 5-yard line is 1 point. A conversion from the 12-yard line is 2 points. The placement of the conversion must be stated to the referee before the team breaks their huddle.

Note: Intercepted extra point attempts may be run back for the corresponding point value of the attempt: **1 or 2 points.**

2. Safety

- a. A safety shall be 2 points. A safety is scored when an offensive player causes the ball to go behind his/her own goal line, and it becomes dead in their team's possession or when the ball carrier has his/her flag pulled in their own end zone. (2 points)
- b. The defensive team shall receive 2 points and possession of the ball.

E. THE BALL CARRIER, BLOCKING, AND DEFENSE.

1. **NO BLOCKING, SCREENING, or JAMMING of receivers ALLOWED AT ANY TIME.**
2. **Offensive charging/hurdling/illegal contact**
 - a. The ball carrier shall strive to avoid having his/her flag pulled by the use of agility rather than power. Any attempt by the ball carrier to run over, charge, hurdle, or straight-arm a defensive player is illegal. The running over and hurdling by the ball carrier will be judged based on a defender's established position.
3. **Stopping the Ball Carrier and Loose Equipment.**
 - a. In order to down the ball carrier, the opponent must pull either flag from the belt.
 - b. Each player is responsible for not having loose clothing or equipment. All clothing must be tucked inside the pants so that the belts and flags will be visibly tight and worn at the waist level on each side.
 - c. If, for any reason a flag falls off accidentally from the ball carrier, a tag with one or both hands on any part of the body will down the ball carrier.
 - d. The defensive player may not strip the ball from the ball carriers hands.
4. **Flag Guarding**
 - a. The ball carrier cannot touch or guard his/her flags by protecting, hacking, or holding the flags. This includes using the ball or the swinging of the arms at or below the belt line to ward off the defender. Flag guarding may be called for intentionally *or* unintentionally guarding flags.
5. **Defensive Roughness.**
 - a. The defense cannot tackle, hold, block, trip, push, charge, or bump the ball carrier out of bounds.
 - b. If the last defensive player between the ball carrier and the goal is guilty of any of the above infractions, (6a) **the ball carrier may be awarded the score he/she would have attained if the foul did not occur** (at the discretion of the official).
 - c. A defensive player cannot hit the quarterback's arm while the quarterback is attempting to pass the ball.
6. **Off-Sides**
 - a. Prior to the snap the Defense may not jump off-sides. No Defender may break the plane and jump off-sides and jump back. Once the plane is broken, the whistle will be blown and play will be stopped.
7. **Defensive Rushing**
 - a. All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Defensive players are allowed to rush the quarterback with their hands up. Doing so may result in a penalty if an official deems contact was made with the rusher and quarterback. Making contact with the football while the ball is in the quarterback's hand may also result in a penalty. These rules are implemented with the best interest in the quarterback's safety.
 - b. Any number of players can rush the quarterback.
 - c. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage.
 - d. Once the ball is handed off, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
 - e. NOTE: Any player on the defense is allowed to rush as long as they originally had started 7 yards behind the line of scrimmage (ball placement.) It is ultimately up to the official's discretion to determine the fairness of the rushing player's starting position.

F. Misconduct & Other Violations

1. Managers are responsible for the sportsmanlike conduct of their players, spectators, and themselves. Unsportsmanlike conduct such as yelling at the opposite team, and/or officials, derogatory comments, and foul language may be penalized by an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty and/or removal from the game, as well as, any or all games left in the season. If the misconduct continues, the game can be forfeited. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis. If a manager, players, or spectator is removed from the game, or a game is called because of their conduct, he or she will not attend at least the next scheduled game. If the manager is removed from a game for any of these reasons, an assistant manager or another teammate will manage the remainder of the game. If an official is threatened or physically attacked by a manager, player, or spectator, the game will be forfeited and that manager, player, or spectator may not be allowed to attend any of the remaining games.

G. STANDINGS / PLAYOFFS.

Standings will be kept up-to-date in the Adult Sports Office and posted to the Adult Sports Website, www.santaclarita.com/adultsports, on a weekly basis. Standings will be kept for all regular season games and played on a win/loss/tie percentage basis for the full schedule. Tie breakers: 1, Head to head competition. 2, Points differential between teams involved. 3, Point differential of all opponents. 4, Point against all opponents.

Incidental contact that may result from normal run of play will be called at Official's discretion.

****NOTE****

All rules are subject to revision at any time

Penalties

Defense

- Off-sides/Encroachment – Play whistled dead. 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and repeat the down.
- Pass Interference – 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down.
- Illegal Contact (Holding/Blocking/Jamming) – 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down. Opportunity for offense to decline.
- Illegal Rushing (Rushing from inside 7 yard marker and breaking the line of scrimmage) – 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and repeat the down. Opportunity for offense to decline.
- Roughing the Passer – 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down.
- Stripping the Ball – 5 yards from the point of foul and automatic first down. If foul occurs behind the line of scrimmage, 5 yards will be assessed from the line of scrimmage.

Offense

- Illegal Forward Pass – 5 yards from the spot of the foul and loss of down.
- Intentional Grounding – Spot of foul and loss of down.
- Illegal QB Direct Run/Illegal run in “no-run zone” – 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down.
- Illegal Motion (More than one person moving, false start, etc.) – 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and repeat the down.
- Holding/Illegal Blocking/Screen – 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and repeat the down.
- Offensive Pass Interference (Illegal pick, pushing off/away defender) – 5 yards from line of scrimmage and repeat the down.
- Flag Guarding and Diving – 5 yards from the point of foul and loss of down. (If first down is gained before the penalty, the 5 yards will be assessed from the spot of the foul with a first down).
- Charging/Hurdling – Will be assessed as unnecessary roughness (15 yards from the spot and loss of down).
- Delay of Game – 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and repeat the down.
- Illegal Hideout – 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down. To avoid penalty, active players must be 3 yards away from the sideline.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct – 15 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down.

****Two unsportsmanlike conduct penalties by one player in the same game will result in ejection from the game and may result in suspension of future games****

Unnecessary Roughness – 15 yards from the point of foul and automatic first down.

Terms

Run: A play that does not include a forward pass prior to crossing the line of scrimmage.

Pass: Any thrown ball that spends time untouched in the air and does not touch the ground.

Forward Pass: A pass thrown by a player from behind the line of scrimmage toward the opponents' goal line.

Lateral Pass: A pass that is not thrown forward (laterally or backwards).