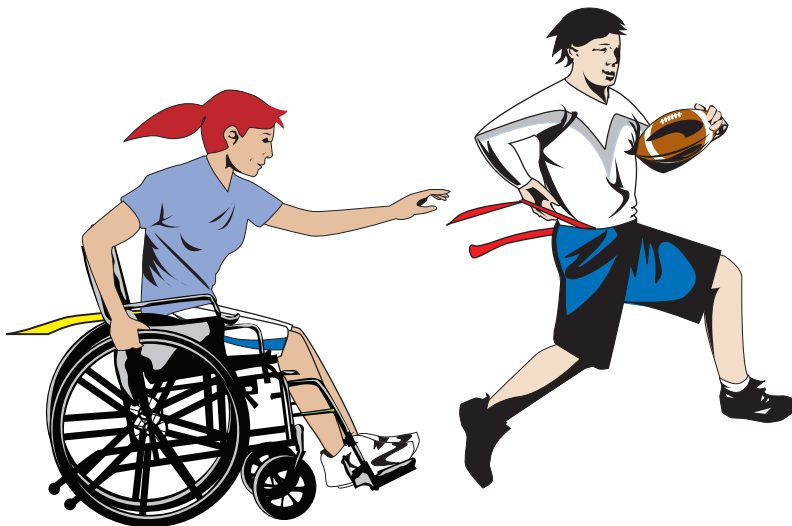




# The Canadian Rule Book for Flag Football





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# Introduction

This Rule Book constitutes the major text required to understand and administer the complete set of rules governing the game of flag football in Canada.

The content of this book includes sport related definitions, general rules and specific rules for playing 5v5 and 7v7 as well as adapted rules for people with disabilities.

There are several additional resources available for players, coaches and officials involved with flag football. The following materials may be obtained through your provincial amateur football association listed in the front of this book.

Flag Football resources are continually updated. The most recent list of resources can be found at [www.footballcanada.com](http://www.footballcanada.com) and includes the following:

## **Awareness Clinic: An Introduction to Flag Football**

Includes:

- Basic Rules of Game
- Position Descriptions
- Sample 3-hour Clinic
- Skill Development Activities

## **League Convenors Guide**

Includes:

- “How To” Information for Setting up a New League
- Budget Preparation
- Delegating Tasks
- Volunteer Recruitment and Retention
- Sample Registration Forms

## **NCCP Community Sport Initiation**

Available through coach certification clinics for novice coaches and includes:

- Safety and Emergency Guidelines
- Rules and flow of Game
- Practice Preparation
- Ethical Decision Making
- Effective Communication
- Drills and Skills

# General Rules

## Equipment

The dimensions and type of football to be used among the different age groups and levels of play may vary.

Cleat specifications are liberal but sharp edges on any part of the footwear may cause removal of the footwear at the discretion of the Referee.

## Safety

The Flag Rules Committee considers all players to be responsible for the safety of their opponents as well as their teammates. It is imperative that each player exercise control to avoid bodily contact or minimize inevitable contact.

## Measurements

All measurements in this rule book are described in the imperial scale.

When field markings dictate the use of metric measurements, all designated distances contained herein, with the exception of those noted below, and may be converted at par from yards to meters. Thus, a fifteen yard penalty will become a fifteen meter penalty, and the offensive team must gain ten meters, as compared to ten yards, for a first down. In both imperial and metric measure, only three downs are allowed to gain the required distance for a first down.

## Ethical Play

It is customary in flag football when a player removes an opponent's flag to end a play, the player must first hold up the flag to show the referee and hand the flag back to the respective opponent. To toss a flag aside or to the ground for the opponent to pick up is considered unsportsmanlike conduct.

The football player who intentionally violates a rule is guilty of unfair play and unsportsmanlike conduct; and whether they escape being penalized; they bring discredit to the good name of the game, which is their duty as a player to uphold.

Rules alone cannot accomplish fair play. Only the continued best efforts by coaches, players, officials and all friends of the game can preserve the high ethical standards set by the game of football.

All players are responsible for the safety of their opponents as well as their teammates; therefore, they must balance their aggressiveness with a measure of control to avoid bodily contact or at least minimize any contact that does occur. Coaches will emphasize safety and fair play at all times. Officials are to exercise no leniency in penalizing the infractions described in the rules and regulations, for to refrain from doing so would serve to condone dangerous play.

Football Canada is designated as a True Sport and with that adopt four core values: fairness, excellence, inclusion and fun.

**TRUE  
SPORT  
LIVES HERE**



# Definitions

## **Adjusted Penalties**

When the normal distance for penalties is applied resulting in a net gain for the team which incurred the less severe penalty.

## **Attendant**

Any person whose role is to help an injured player off the field.

## **\*Bad Snap**

When the snapped ball does not travel 5 yards before it hits the ground or is not touched by the quarterback.

## **Ball Put into Play**

The instant the ball is snapped on a scrimmage play or a convert attempt.

## **Blocking**

When a player deliberately impedes an opponent's approach to the ball, ball carrier, or potential ball carrier with or without making bodily contact with the opponent.

## **Bobbled Ball**

When a player attempting to receive a pass touches the ball, loses contact with the ball, then catches the ball without the ball touching another player.

## **Bodily Contact**

When a player contacts an opponent in such a manner as to stop the opponent's forward motion, to push the opponent backwards, to knock the opponent down or to move the opponent off stride or away from the opponent's intended direction or position.

## **Boundary Lines**

All the sidelines, end zone sidelines, and dead lines.

## **Captain**

Any 2 members of a team identified to the officials before the game as a spokesperson for offensive or defensive units of a team.

## **Caught**

See Control

## **Coach**

A team member whose primary responsibility is team strategy.

## **Completed Pass**

Any pass which is legally caught in bounds prior to the ball becoming dead.

## **Contact**

When a player touches any part of an opponent's body or equipment in any manner.

## **Control**

When a player has the ball firmly held in 1 or both hands, arms, or legs or holds the ball firmly under the body without having the ball touch the ground. The grip on the ball must be firm enough to enable the player to stop the rotation of the ball and to exhibit influence over its direction. The player must also exhibit a 'football move' after gripping the ball.

**Convert**

A score of 1 or 2 points for the team which, during its convert attempt, legally advances the ball into the opponent's end zone.

**Convert Attempt**

A scrimmage play which a team is entitled to use for the purpose of scoring bonus points immediately after having scored a touchdown.

**Convert Spot**

A spot or mark placed in the center of field 12 yards from goal line for use in 2 point convert plays.

**Dead Ball**

When the ball is not playable by either team.

**Dead Line**

The line marking the end of the end zone; it is not in the end zone itself. For the purposes of certain rules, when this line is not entirely parallel to the goal line, the furthest point away from the goal line will be considered the dead line.

**Defense**

The team that does not have possession of the ball.

**\*Deflected Punt**

A punted ball which, immediately after being punted touches any player and continues to travel in a direction away from the punter's dead line.

**\*Deliberate Grounding**

When the passer deliberately throws the ball out of bounds or to an area where there is no receiver in an apparent attempt to avoid a loss of yards.

**Direct Path**

A straight line between a defensive and offensive player at any given time.

**Diving**

When the ball carrier deliberately lunges forward to gain extra yards or to avoid being flagged.

**Double Fouls**

When 1 team commits 2 or more infractions on the same play.

**Down**

1 of 3 consecutive attempts the offense may use to advance the ball towards the defense's goal line.

**Down the Ball**

When the defense catches a loose ball or knocks a loose or free ball to the ground.

**Dribbled Ball**

When a player deliberately or accidentally kicks the ball with his/her foot or leg below the knee, without having had control of the ball in the hand.

**Dual Foul**

When an infraction is committed by both teams on the same play.

**End Zone**

The area bounded by the goal line, end zone sidelines and dead line. The goal line is part of the end zone. Goal posts, and any attached material such as pads, are considered to be in the end zone. End zone sidelines and the dead line are not part of the end zone.

**End Zone Sideline**

The sideline extended from the goal line to the dead line. It is not in the end zone.

**Extension**

When the ball carrier extends the arm(s) in an obvious attempt to gain extra distance by moving the furthest advance of the ball forward.

**Field**

The area inside the boundary lines. The boundary lines themselves are out of bounds and are not considered to be in the field.

**Field of Play**

The area bounded by the goal lines and the sidelines. These lines are not considered to be in the field of play.

**First Down**

The first of 3 consecutive chances (“downs”) awarded to a team to advance the ball towards the opponent’s goal line.

**Flagging**

When an opponent removes a player’s flag to stop a play.

**Forward Pass**

When the ball is deliberately thrown by any offensive player from behind the line of scrimmage toward the opponent’s dead line.

**Foul**

A violation of the rules which allows a player to take unfair advantage of the opponent.

**\*Free Ball**

A live ball that is not in a player’s control and can be legally recovered and advanced by either team. The ball is considered to be free from the time it leaves a player’s body until the instant it touches the ground.

**Free Punt**

A punt made by a player after crossing the line of scrimmage or after receiving a kick off or intercepting a pass.

**Furthest Advance (of the Ball)**

The part of the ball that was closest to the opponent’s dead line at the instant the ball was considered to be dead.

**Goal Line**

The line marking the end of the field of play. The goal line is in the end zone.

**Goal Post**

Goal posts are not necessary in flag football.

**Half**

1 or 2 periods of playing time in a regular game or overtime divided by a period of rest.

**Half Time**

The rest period between the 2 halves of a game.

**Hand-off**

When the ball is handed in any direction, not thrown, from 1 player to another; both players must be touching the ball simultaneously.

**\*Hash Mark**

Line or spot 24 yards from sideline in 5 vs.5 and 24 yard lines in 7 vs.7.

**\*Home Team**

The team that has first choice to receive, kick off, or choose an end to begin the second half of a regular game or an overtime game.

**Huddle**

When a team assembles on the field to decide offensive or defensive strategy for the next play.

**Illegal Participation**

When a fan or team member enters the field after a play has begun and interferes with a player who is legally on the field.

**\*Illegal Procedure**

When a player violates a procedure rule at the beginning of a kick off, convert attempt, or scrimmage play.

**Illegal Re-entry**

When a player intentionally leaves the field while a play is in progress, then returns and interferes with the play.

**Illegal Substitution**

When a player enters the field in between the ball is snapped and ball goes dead.

**Illegal Use of Hands**

Any contact with the hands that is made by a player on an opposing player which clearly detains the latter from playing the position desired, or the use of the goal posts to change one's direction.

**Impede**

To force an opponent to change direction or to slow down with or without contact.

**In Bounds**

When the ball or a player has not touched the boundary lines or a person or object that is out of bounds.

**\*In Flight**

Without having touched the ground or any object since last kicked, punted, or touched.

**Incidental Contact**

When a player makes contact with an opponent without moving the opponent off stride or away from the opponent's intended direction or position.

**Incomplete Pass**

A pass which touches the ground, official, or goal post assembly or goes out of bounds prior to being caught.

**Infraction**

See "FOUL"

**Intercepted Pass**

When a player's pass is caught by an opponent.

**Interference**

Any obstruction, blocking, pushing off, screening, or illegal contact committed by a player of either team against an opponent.

**Interference with the Rusher**

When the offense does not provide the rusher(s) with direct access to the quarterback or punter (7v7).

**Jarred Ball**

When a player accidentally knocks the ball loose from the hand(s) of the ball carrier who had gained control of the ball.

**\*Kick Off**

When a team kicks the ball to its opponents by means of a place kick to begin a game, a half, or immediately following a convert attempt or safety touch.

**\*Kicking Tee**

A small device to be placed on the ground and used to hold the ball upright for a place kick.

**Lateral Pass**

See "Onside Pass".

**Line of Scrimmage**

An imaginary line extending from sideline to sideline, parallel to the goal line, the position of which is determined by the point of the ball closest to the defense's goal line.

**Live Ball**

When the ball is considered to be in play. This begins when the ball is snapped or kicked off (7V7), after the referee has blown the whistle to indicate that a play may begin, and continues until the ball is considered to be dead.

**\*Loose Ball**

A live ball that is not in a player's control and can be legally recovered and advanced only by the team considered to be in possession. The ball is considered to be loose from the time it leaves the ground until it touches a player's body.

**Major Foul**

An act which severely threatens a player's safety or is intended to injure any participant.

**Manager**

A team member whose primary responsibility is administration of team logistics.

**Muffed**

An unsuccessful attempt to catch a lateral, kick off (7V7), punt (7V7), or snapped ball, the ball being touched in the process.

**Muffed Snap**

When the snap is muffed by the Quarterback.

**\*Neutral Zone (Kick Off)**

The area extending from sideline to sideline between the line of kick off and the line 20 yards in advance of the line of kick off.

**Neutral Zone (Scrimmage)**

The 1 yard wide area extending from sideline to sideline in front of the line of scrimmage.

**\*No Yards**

When a player of the punting team touches the punted ball first or is within the restraining zone at the time the ball is touched by an opponent.

**\*Non-Punting Team**

The team which did not punt the ball last.

**Objectionable Conduct**

The use of intimidating, profane, obscene, insulting language or gestures to an opponent, official, or spectator by any player or occupant of a team bench. Conduct such as throwing the ball at an opponent, official or occupant of a team bench or the threatening or striking of an official, player, or occupant of a team bench. Prolonged arguments with the officials.

**Obstruction**

When a player impedes an opponent's approach to the ball, ball carrier or intended receiver with or without contacting the opponent.

**Offense**

The team that has possession of the ball.

**Official**

An individual on the field who is responsible for the orderly conduct of the game and the enforcement of the rules.

**Offset Penalties**

When the normal distance for dual penalties is not applied and both penalties are considered equal in value, resulting in no net gain by either team. This usually results in the play being wiped out and restarted at the point of last scrimmage.

**Offside**

When a player is in or beyond the neutral zone the instant that the ball is snapped or kicked off (7V7); or when a player is closer to the opponent's dead line the instant that a teammate touches the ball.

**Offside Pass**

Any pass that goes in the direction of the opponent's dead line.

**Onside**

When a player is not in or beyond the neutral zone at the instant that the ball is snapped or kicked off (7V7). When a player is parallel to, or closer to their own dead line than a teammate who last touched the ball, at the instant or anytime after that particular teammate last touched the ball.

**Onside Pass**

When the ball is thrown, dropped, knocked, batted, or propelled in any manner (including bouncing off the body) by a player parallel to, or in the direction of that player's dead line.

**Opponent**

A player on the opposite team.

**Option**

When a non-offending team has a choice of a penalty or to let the play stand. This also may involve a choice of application of a penalty.

**Out of Bounds**

When a player or the ball touches the boundary lines, or the ground or any object on or beyond these lines, including an official, any player or substitute. A player with possession of the ball touches any boundary line, the ground or any object beyond these lines, except a field official or another player who is out of bounds while the ball carrier is fully in bounds.

**\*Overtime**

A playing time of 20 minutes duration, divided into 2 periods of 10 minutes each.

**Pass**

A ball thrown, dropped, knocked, or batted by a player in any direction or that bounces off a player to any direction.

**Pass Interference**

Any interference made by a player against an eligible receiver before an eligible receiver has caught the pass.

**Passer**

Any player who attempts to throw a pass.

**Period**

1 of 2 portions of specified playing time in a half or overtime.

**Personal Foul**

An act whereby a player does not control the body motions and thereby threatens the safety of others by making aggressive bodily contact.

**\*Place Kick**

When the ball is kicked while it is resting on a kicking tee or is held on the ground by a player of the same-team during a kick off.

**Plane of the Goal Line**

An imaginary line perpendicular to the edge of the goal line closest to the field of play and extending from sideline to sideline.

**Play**

A period of action that begins when the ball is snapped or kicked off (7v7) and ends when the ball is considered to be dead.

**Playing Time**

The period of time as indicated by the referee during which scrimmage, kick off (7v7) and convert attempts may be attempted.

**Point of Scrimmage**

The spot in the field of play where the ball is placed on the scrimmage line for the next scrimmage play.

**Possession**

When a player has control of the ball (player possession) or when a team has the right to advance the ball, be awarded a first down or continue its downs (team possession).

**\*Punt**

When a ball is deliberately dropped from the hand and kicked before it touches the ground. Control of the ball must be gained before the ball was dropped. When a player obviously attempts to punt after gaining control of the ball and the ball strikes any part of the punter's body, a punt is considered to have occurred.

**\*Punt Receiver**

A player of the team which did not punt the ball last and who attempts to play the ball.

**\*Punter**

A player who attempts to punt the ball.

**Pushing Off**

When any player pushes an opponent with sufficient force to knock that player off stride or away from that player's intended direction.

**Quarter**

See Period.

**Quarterback**

The offensive player who receives the snap of the ball from the Centre during a scrimmage play for the purpose of running, passing or punting the ball (7v7).

**Recover**

To gain possession.

**Redirect**

See Impede.

**Referee**

The chief official who is in charge of the game and all other officials.

**Regulation Field**

The size of the field is 80 yards by 25 yards wide for 5v5 and 110 yards by 65 yards for 7v7.

**Regulation Time**

The length of the game, which is 2 x 20 minute halves on 5v5 and 4 x 15 minute quarters in 7v7.

**\*Restraining Zone**

A protective circular area of 5 yards radius, the centre point being the ball when it is touched.

**\*Return Punt**

A punt that is made by a player after receiving a punt from an opponent.

**\*Rouge**

A score of 1 point earned by a team when it legally punts or kicks off the ball into the opponent's end zone or beyond, and the opponents are not legally able to bring the ball out of their own end zone. (7v7 only)



**Rusher**

The defensive player who crosses the line of scrimmage before any teammate.

**Rusher's Line**

An imaginary line parallel to and 7 yards from line of scrimmage 5v5. 5 yards for 7v7.

**Safety Touch**

A score of 2 points against the team which does not legally carry, punt, or pass the ball out of its own end zone after 1 of its players has caused the ball to enter its own end zone from the field of play.

**Screening**

When any player who is not playing the ball extends the arms or waves a hand in an attempt to distract a receiver, to block a receiver's vision, or to touch the ball.

**Scrimmage Play**

The action by the offense to score or advance the ball towards the defense's goal line by passing, running, or punting (7v7). It begins by a snap of the ball by the Centre to a teammate.

**Set**

When the ball is resting on the ground or the scrimmage bag while in the Centre's hand(s) ready to be snapped.

**Shotgun Formation**

Term used to describe positioning of the quarterback and Center. Space is left between the two players, allowing the quarterback to start further back from the line of scrimmage, further from the defense.

**Sideline**

The line marking the side of the field of play between the goal lines.

**Simultaneous Possession**

When players of opposing teams legally obtain possession of the ball at the same time.

**Sleeper Play**

A deliberate attempt by the offensive team to deceive the defense as to the number and position of offensive team players who will participate in the next play. It is usually executed by having an offensive player (who participated in the previous play) stand on the field in front of the team bench thereby being camouflaged. A "hurry up" offense is not considered to be a sleeper play if all offensive players are clearly visible to the defense and there is no apparent attempt to hide their positions.

**Snap**

The action of the Centre at the beginning of a scrimmage play in throwing the ball from its position on the ground, through the legs, to the Quarterback.

**Stripping the Ball**

See "Jarred Ball"

**Substitute**

A player replacing a teammate on the field.

**\*Sudden Death**

An overtime game during which the first team to legally score is declared the winner.

**Team Member**

A player, coach, manager, doctor, trainer, assistant, or any person allowed in the team bench area by the team.

**Teammate**

A player on the same team.

**Two Minute Warning**

When the referee blows the whistle 2 times in succession indicating to both teams that 2 minutes remains in the half or game.

**Time**

The playing time permitted as indicated by the referee.

**Time Count**

A period of 30 seconds given to the offense prior to a scrimmage play to huddle and put the ball into play.

**Time In**

When the referee has indicated by a whistle that playing time in the period has started, or has resumed after a time out.

**Time Out**

When the referee has indicated by a whistle and a criss-crossing of the arms over the head that the clock has stopped and playing time is not being consumed.

**Tipped Pass**

A pass that is touched by 1 player then caught by the same player, a teammate, or an opponent.

**Toss**

“See Onside Pass”

**Touchdown**

A score of 6 points for the team which legally carries the ball into the opponent's end zone or legally gains possession of the ball inside the opponent's end zone.

**Trainer**

A team member who is qualified to administer first aid and is identified as a qualified person to the officials.

**Unobstructed Path**

When the opponents allow a player to continue running the intended path without causing the player to slow down or change direction to avoid contact.

**\*Visiting Team**

The team that has first choice to receive, kick off, or choose an end to begin the first half of a regular game or an overtime game.

**Yard Line**

An imaginary line parallel to the goal line, extending from sideline to sideline, which represents each yard between the goal lines. On a well -marked field, every yard between the goal lines is marked at the hash marks and sidelines, and every 5 yards is marked from sideline to sideline.

\* denotes 7 v 7

# The Canadian Rule Book for Flag Football

## Rule 1 – General

- 1 The game of flag football shall be governed by the playing rules, regulations and definitions as written in this book, as well as the rulings in the official Case Book.
- 2 Whenever changes in the playing rules are permitted by league or tournament organizers, these options should be provided in writing to each participating team and official prior to the season or tournament.
- 3 The Referee is responsible for the adherence to the rules and regulations by both teams and all officials. The Referee will make the final decision on any on-field situation not covered by the rules and regulations. All officials should strive to maintain a safe environment for the players.
- 4 At any time during the game, if a referee feels that continuing to play the game at hand may jeopardize a player's safety, the official may remove that player from the game immediately. An explanation should be included on the game sheet as to the reason why the player was removed. A referee's decision in this matter is final and cannot be challenged by the player affected or his/her teammates. Teams/players wishing to protest an official's decision must do so in writing to the League Executive within 48 hours of the conclusion of the game.
- 5 A participant (player or official), suffering from a wound or laceration, where oozing or bleeding occurs, must leave the playing field until appropriate medical treatment is administered. The participant may return to the playing field only after the bleeding has stopped and the affected area or the open wound has been completely and securely covered. The referee must approve the participant's return to the playing field.
- 6 If a player or official has any part of his/her uniform or equipment saturated with blood, the uniform must be cleansed or changed immediately. "Saturated" being defined as the amount of blood being sufficient to soak through the garment and onto the skin or such that the blood would easily be transferred to another participant.

## Rule 2 – Field and Equipment

### 1. The Field

The Standard Field of Play U16 80 by 25 including end zone. U18 100 by 25 including end zone. In 7v7 the field is 110 by 65 yards. The size of field may be altered for specific events and to suit the needs or resources of independent leagues.

Field specifications and markings are diagramed and detailed on page 40, 45 & 56.

- 1.1 Goal posts are not required for the game of flag football. If they exist on the field, they must be padded to prevent injury and must be in the end zone if present.
- 1.2 League/Tournament organizers should decide the ground rules regarding obstructions and inform the teams and officials of these decisions in writing prior to the season/tournament. When obstructions are not covered by the ground rules, the Referee will consult the teams to arrive at ground rules that are satisfactory to both teams.
- 1.3 The team bench areas should be on the same side of the field unless circumstances dictate otherwise. The team bench area is to be marked. All team accessories, such as buckets, bags and equipment, should be placed at least 5 yards from the sidelines.
- 1.4 Team members must stay in the team bench area or be penalized for objectionable conduct unless they are given permission by an official to leave the area or are entering the field during the legal substitution as a player. Only team members are allowed to stay in the team bench area; anyone else in the area must leave immediately or the team will be penalized for objectionable conduct.
- 1.5 Any spectator that interferes with the normal course of the game will be ejected from the field area. It is the local organization's responsibility to ensure that the ejected spectator complies with the decision, to ensure the safety of all players, staff members and officials.
- 1.6 If a spectator interferes during the play, the official will evaluate the impact of the interference and act accordingly. For example, if it is obvious that a touchdown would have been scored without the spectator's interference, the official will allow the touchdown. If the impact is not clear, the down will be replayed at the initial line of scrimmage or distance gained at point of interference at officials discretion.

### 2. The Ball

- 2.1 Teams may use their own ball or mutually agree to use one game ball.
- 2.2 Recommended balls
  - Spalding J5J - U18 Female
  - Spalding J5Y - U16 Male
  - Spalding J5V - Senior Men's
- 2.3 No team or player is permitted to make alterations to the natural surface of the ball being used. Teams doing so will be penalized for objectionable conduct. The Referee must remove any ball that has been altered.
- 2.4 Players are not permitted to use adhesive material, paint, grease or any other slippery substance applied to equipment or on a player's person, clothing or attachments that affects the ball or an opponent.

### 3. The Kicking Tee (7v7 only)

- 3.1 The kicking tee must not raise the lowest part of the ball more than 2 inches off the ground or it will be deemed 'illegal procedure.' The kicking team is responsible for removing the kicking tee from the field after the play is dead. Failure to do so will result in objectionable conduct penalty against the team.

### 4. Uniforms

- 4.1 Official tournament jerseys must be worn during play and properly tucked into shorts. If two teams are using similar jerseys, the winner of the coin toss has the option to change sweaters unless one (1) team agrees to change its colors voluntarily.

- 4.2 If numbered jerseys are worn then all players must wear different numbers and ensure they are visible. Changing jersey numbers during a game is deceitful to the opponents and prohibited. Uniforms cannot contain any equipment that would cause injury to any player, such as flexible padding.
- 4.3 Players must not wear shorts or pants that have pockets, belt, press studs or clips of any kind. Shorts or pants must be of a solid color than the flags, to avoid camouflage of flags. Players cannot tape or secure their shorts or pants to meet this regulation. Short pockets may be sewn shut so that an opponent's finger does not get caught and passes inspection of the game official.

## 5. Player Equipment

- 5.1 All players must wear a protective mouthpiece; there are no exceptions.
- 5.2 A player is permitted to wear athletic support/protector, completely covered by clothing. Tape or bandages are permitted if they are non-abrasive or are of a non-hardening material in a wet or dry state.
- 5.3 Jewelry must be removed prior to the start of the game. If it is not possible to remove the jewelry it must be covered up completely, padded and secured. Medical bracelets may be worn but they must be fastened securely so as not to cause injury.
- 5.4 Head wear permitted is limited to religious headdress that is proven to be securely fastened and not harmful to any participants.
- 5.5 Other headgear including bandanas or tuques are permitted, caps with bills are not permitted.
- 5.6 Sunglasses are not permitted unless prescribed by a medical doctor, in which case a prescription note is required and the sunglasses are to be secured with a sport band.
- 5.7 Knee and elbow guards must be flexible and contain no hard material.
- 5.8 Arm casts may be worn only to protect an injury and must be flexible and contain no materials in a wet or dry state. Knee braces may be worn but must be completely covered by pants or by adhesive or tensor bandages such that no part of the brace is exposed, so a finger cannot be placed between any edge of the brace and the leg. Finger splints may be worn to protect an injury, but the finger splint must be appropriately padded. The Referee will have the final decision on the acceptability of this type of equipment.
- 5.9 If a player or official has any part of their uniform or equipment saturated with blood, the uniform must be cleansed or changed immediately. "Saturated" being defined as the amount of blood being sufficient to soak through the garment and into the skin or such that blood would easily be transferred to another participant.
- 5.10 Players may wear cleats but must be rubber cleats. There is no minimum or maximum number of cleats to be worn, but cleats must be a part of the natural design of the shoes and in good condition. Spikes or similar sharp pointed type shoes such as track spikes, metal baseball cleats, or golf shoes are not permitted.

## 6. Team Equipment

Different types of flags are available, including:

- 6.1 Looped belts, in which the belt is tightened around the waist and does not come off. Flags are attached with either Velcro or suction sockets. Looped belts are not suggested as there is risk of appendages getting stuck in the belt, causing injury to both the flagger and the flag wearer.
- 6.2 Clipped belts, in which the belt is fastened around the waist with a quick release clip are available in different sizes.
- 6.3 Cloth flags, in which two flags are worn by each player, one on each hip. The white section of the flag (8 inches x 2 inches) must be worn inside the pants. The colored section of the flag (14 inches x 2 inches) must be worn on the outside of the pants. The officials must always be able to see a part of the white section of the ball carrier's flag otherwise a penalty for flag guarding will be called.
- 6.3 Every effort must be made to keep one flag on each hip. Flag belts are the responsibility of the offensive players and must be pulled tight before every play to avoid shifting of the flags during a play. The flags must not be altered or cut, and the sockets must not be glued or changed in any way. The flag belts and flags must be clearly visible and must not be covered in any way by the players' uniforms.

- 6.4 If a player is wearing unacceptable attire, equipment or shoes, the player must leave the game for at least one play and remove the equipment before returning. If the player returns to the game with the unacceptable equipment, the team will be penalized for objectionable conduct and the player will be ejected.
- Note: Inspections of players' attire and equipment will be inspected by the official at the beginning of each game. The referee has the final decision and will decide on any on-field ruling which is not covered by this rule book.

## Rule 3 – Team Members

### 1 Players

- 1.1 The number of players and rules directing minimum number allowed and substitutions are different for 5v5 and 7v7. Refer to page 41 or page 47 for this information.
- 1.2 Flag Football is a game that is enjoyed by everyone. Teams can be all male, all female or co-ed depending on the leagues, national tournaments and international competitions.

### 2 Substitutions

- 2.1 Substitute players may enter the field only from their bench area and only when the ball is dead. They may not enter the field once the offensive team breaks its huddle. A player who enters the field to communicate a play to a teammate must remain on the field for the next play. The penalty for violating these rules is illegal substitution.
- 2.2 A player leaving the field for a substitution must go directly to the team bench area. Leaving or deviating from this route will be a penalty for illegal substitution.

### 3 Captains

- 3.1 Team members identified to the official before the game as spokespersons for offensive and defensive units of a team shall be considered team captains. Each team is permitted a maximum of captains as specified in 5v5 and 7v7. In case of injury or ejection, an alternate captain may be identified to the officials.
- 3.2 Only a team captain is entitled to an explanation of the rules, including choices for penalty options. Only a team captain is entitled to request an equipment check.

### 4 Coaches and Managers

- 4.1 A coach or manager that is a player gets no special treatment while on the field, unless identified as a team captain. While off the field, a coach or manager must stay in the bench area or be penalized for objectionable conduct.

### 5 Injured Player

- 5.1 A doctor, trainer or assistant may not enter the field to look after an injured player without the Referee's permission. A coach, manager, doctor, trainer or assistant may not coach the players while on the field during an injury situation. A team violating these rules will be penalized for objectionable conduct.

## Rule 4 – Timing / Overtime / Time Outs

### 1 Length of Game

- 1.1 The official game is 40 minutes (2x20 minute halves) in 5v5. The official game in 7v7 is approximately one hour and is detailed on page 50.

### 2 Referee Responsibility

- 2.1 The referee shall be the official time keeper and shall be governed by the timing regulations in determining the amount of playing time that has elapsed.
- 2.2 Only the Referee can stop and start the clock. Whenever the Referee starts the clock, the signals for starting the clock must be given first, and then the clock is to be started. Whenever the Referee stops the clock, the clock must be stopped first, then the appropriate signals given.

### 3 The Play Clock

- 3.1 The clock runs continually and is only stopped for time outs and injuries.
- 3.2 When the clock has been stopped, it starts again at the snap.

### 4 Overtime

- 4.1 In the event of a tied game unless otherwise noted on league or tournament regulations, overtime will be played. The period between the end of the game and the start of the overtime halves will be 2 minutes. A coin toss determines first possession of overtime. There will be no time outs granted during the overtime period.
- 4.2 Refer to 5v5 and 7v7 rules for the variations in over time procedures (refer to page 46 for 5v5 and page 52 for 7v7)

### 5 Time Outs

- 5.1 Each team has two (2) 60-second time outs per half. These cannot be carried over to the second half or overtime.
- 5.2 Each team captain will be told when 10 seconds remains in the time out. Teams may shorten the 60 second time period if they both agree.
- 5.3 Time outs can only be called by the referee and any on-field player, through the referee and only when the ball is dead.
- 5.4 After the team time out, all offensive players must return to the huddle. Violation of this rule shall be penalized as illegal procedure.
- 5.5 Clock will stop for the length of the time out.

### 6 Team Time Outs

- 6.1 Stopped time / interrupted play used for an equipment check are not to be charged as a team time out; abuse of this privilege will be penalized for objectionable conduct against the team captain who requested the time out.

### 7 Injury Time Outs

- 7.1 Only the Referee may call an official's time out to allow a team to attend to an injured player. If the time out is called by the Referee, the injured player must be removed from the field for at least one (1) play, unless the injured player's team calls a time out. The Referee has full authority to delay the game until the injured player is safely removed from the field.
- 7.2 Unnecessary delay in removing the player shall be penalized for delay of game.



# Rule 5 – Game Procedures

## 1 Pre-game Conference

- 1.1 The Referee is responsible for the adherence to the rules and regulations by both teams and all officials. The Referee will make the final decision on any on-field situation not covered by the rules and regulations in this book.
- 1.2 Approximately three (3) minutes prior to the scheduled start time of the game, and immediately following the rest period, at least one (1) captain from each team will meet with the Referee at center field to review the field conditions and field markings and conduct the coin toss.
- 1.3 A coin toss determines first possession. The winner of the coin toss starts with possession of the football, while losers of the coin toss have choice of end zone to defend.
- 1.4 The team that loses the coin toss gets possession at the beginning of the second half.

## 2 General Play

- 2.1 The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has three (3) plays to cross midfield. When a team crosses midfield, it has three (3) plays to score a touchdown. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on its 5-yard line.  
Note: In Canadian Flag Rules there are three (3) plays to cross mid-field or score a touchdown, while in IFAF Flag 5v5 Rules used in international competition, there are four (4) plays to cross mid-field or score a touchdown.
- 2.2 To begin a play, the ball must be snapped by the offensive Center, from the point of scrimmage to the quarterback. There is no minimal distance required by the quarterback who can be either up close to the center or in shot-gun formation.  
1 yard is required between the offensive and defensive line. Players may not line up for a play within 1 yard forward the Line of Scrimmage.
- 2.3 An automatic first down by penalty will overrule the other requirements regarding three (3) plays to make either a first down or score.
- 2.4 If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its 5-yard line.
- 2.5 All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offensive 5- yard line.
- 2.6 If an offensive penalty past midfield occurs, which takes the next down behind midfield marker, the offensive team must still make a touchdown in 3 plays.
- 2.7 “No-running zones,” are located five (5) yards in front of each end zone. When Offense starts a play within the five yard “no running zone,” the ball carrier cannot run across the line of scrimmage (must be a pass play).
- 2.8 The quarterback cannot run with the ball past the line of scrimmage, unless the ball has been handed, tossed or pitched to another player and then returned.
- 2.9 Once the ball carrier has crossed the line of scrimmage the ball cannot be handed off, tossed, pitched or passed forward in any way.
- 2.10 An offense may use multiple handoffs behind the line of scrimmage. Only backward & lateral handoffs are allowed during the down.
- 2.11 Legal Forward Pass – Ball must be thrown from behind or on the line of scrimmage and must be thrown across the line of scrimmage. 5v5
- 2.12 Kickoffs are do not occur in 5v5. Rules that outline kicking are found in the 7v7 section.
- 2.13 Teams change end at half. The time can also be altered based on the skill level of the athletes, number of participants and size of the playing surface.

### **3 Touch Downs**

- 3.1 A touchdown is scored when a player has legal possession of the ball in the opponent's end zone.
- 3.2 The ball is considered to be in the end zone when at least one hip of the ball carrier is on or over the ground in the end zone, or when it crosses the extended plane of the goal line.
- 3.3 When the ball is in the end zone, it is considered to be still in the end zone until it is brought entirely out of the end zone into the field of play.
- 3.4 The team scoring the most points during regulation time is declared the winner. If the teams are tied after regulation time and a winner must be declared, the team scoring the most points during overtime is declared the winner.

## Rule 6 – Live Ball / Dead Ball

### 1 Live Ball / Dead Ball

#### 1.1 Live Ball

The ball is live after the Referee has signaled play to begin and the ball has been snapped by the team in possession. The ball will remain live until the ball is ruled dead according to the dead-ball rules. A team cannot advance the ball or score unless the ball is live.

#### 1.2 Free Ball

A free ball is a live ball, such as a tipped ball, that is not in a player's possession and can be legally recovered by either team. The ball can be caught and advanced by the same offensive player who initially lost possession or by a defensive player. Any player may recover the ball. The ball is considered to be free from the time it leaves a player's body until the instant it touches the ground.

#### 1.3 Dead Ball

The ball is dead when any of the dead-ball conditions are met. A live ball becomes dead when an official's whistle is blown. The team in possession can advance no further when the ball is dead.

1.4 Substitutions may be made only when ball is dead and approved by the official. If a ball carrier's flag falls off, the play will be whistled dead and the ball will be spotted where the flag fell off. Players are eligible to catch a pass or receive the ball by hand off, toss or pitch if their flag has fallen off but unable to advance. The play will be called dead where the player (with no flag) caught the ball.

1.5 There are no fumbles. The ball becomes dead at the spot from which the ball was dropped. If the QB doesn't gain possession of the ball during the snap, the ball will be placed at the line of scrimmage and result in a loss of downs or turn over on downs.

1.6 A play is ruled "dead" when:

- An official blows his whistle.
- Ball carrier's flag is pulled or ball carrier otherwise becomes illegal.
- Ball carrier steps out of bounds
- Ball carrier dives or jumps
- Points are scored.
- When any part of the ball carrier's body, other than his hand or foot touches the ground.
- When the ball touches the goal post assembly
- When the ball touches an official (it shall be considered as having touched the ground).
- When the flag of the player with possession of the ball falls off or out of position.

1.7 When the whistle is blown inadvertently by an official, the play shall stand unless the Referee decides that the whistle affected the result of the play. The Referee will decide which team is adversely affected by the whistle; that team may choose to let the play stand when the whistle blew or repeat the last play.

1.8 If the Referee cannot decide which team is adversely affected, the play shall be repeated.

1.9 Any fouls which occur during the play and are allowed to stand will be administered as they would be in a regular play situation. Dead-ball fouls will be administered in all cases.

## **Rule 7 – In and Out of Bounds**

### **1.0 In Bounds**

- 1.1 The ball is in bounds when it is within the boundary lines. The ball is considered to be still in bounds while it is over or outside the boundary lines until it touches the boundary lines or any person or object that is out of bounds.
- 1.2 Any person who has not touched the boundary lines and has not touched the ground, a person or an object that is on or beyond the boundary lines, is considered to be still in bounds.

### **2.0 Out of Bounds**

- 2.1 The ball is out of bounds when it touches the boundary lines or the ground beyond the boundary lines. The ball is out of bounds when it touches an object or a person that is out of bounds.
- 2.2 Any person or object that is touching the boundary lines or the ground beyond the boundary lines is out of bounds. An airborne object or object suspended over the playing field is considered out of bounds.

## Rule 8 – Control and Possession of the Ball

### 1 Control of the Ball

- 1.1 A player is considered to have control of the ball when the player has the ball firmly held in one (1) or both hands, arms or legs or holds the ball firmly in one (1) or both hands, arms or legs or holds the ball firmly under the body without having the ball touch the ground. The grip on the ball must be firm enough to enable the player to stop the rotation of the ball and to exhibit influence over its direction.

### 2 Possession of the Ball

- 2.1 A team must have possession of the ball to score a touchdown or to earn a first down. When a team obtains possession from the opponents, they will be awarded a first down where the ball becomes dead. After being awarded a first down, a team keeps possession for three (3) downs or three (3) plays, unless the opponents gain control of the ball, or either is awarded first down by penalty. During the three (3) downs or three (3) plays, the team in possession must gain the required distance for first down or score a touchdown, otherwise it will give up possession.
- 2.2 A player is considered to have possession of the ball if that player has control of the ball. If control of the ball is lost, the player no longer is considered to have possession of the ball.
- 2.3 A team is considered to have possession of the ball when one (1) of its players has possession of the ball or awarded possession by the rules. A team loses possession of when the opponents intercepts a pass or gain control of a free ball.

## Rule 9 – The Huddle

### 1 Huddle

- 1.1 The offensive team on the field must hold a huddle after a time-out, half time, or a change of possession. A huddle is not mandatory in any other cases. An infraction to this rule brings a penalty for illegal procedures.
- 1.2 The team on offense has thirty (30) seconds to put the ball in play.  
The official will give a reasonable period of time for both teams to regroup and will then whistle the thirty (30) seconds period to start. If the ball is not put in play before the end of the thirty (30) seconds, the offense will receive a penalty for a time count violation.

# Rule 10 – The Running Game

## 1 Running

- 1.1 The center is the player who gives the ball to the quarterback via a snap. The center cannot take a direct hand off back from the quarterback (no center sneak play). Any violation of this play is illegal procedure.
- 1.2 The center must take a position facing the defense with the feet straddling the line of scrimmage. The ball must be snapped off the ground and between the legs in one (1) motion in the direction from toe to heel. Any player who snaps the ball shall be considered as the center.
- 1.3 The line of scrimmage and point of scrimmage shall be determined by the officials according to the dead-ball rules and scrimmage regulations.
- 1.4 The quarterback is the player who receives the ball directly from the snap.
- 1.5 Tosses or sweeps behind the line of scrimmage are allowed and are running plays.
- 1.6 The player who takes the handoff, toss or pitch can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- 1.7 No player is allowed to move to try to draw the opponent's offside.  
The quarterback cannot use tactics to try to draw the opponent offside (illegal procedure). The defensive unit on the field cannot shout terms that would confuse the offense and draw them offside (penalty).
- 1.8 All defensive players are eligible to rush once the ball has been handed off or tossed, or there is a play action fake or fake handoff.
- 1.9 Spinning is allowed, but the ball carrier cannot dive forward or jump to avoid a defensive player or gain yardage (no diving). One foot, at least, must remain in contact with the ground.
- 1.10 It is up to the ball carrier to avoid contact with the defender.
- 1.11 The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's hips are when the flag is pulled not where the ball is. The ball shall be placed so the its long axis is parallel to the sidelines.

# Rule 11 – Receiving

## 1 Receiving

- 1.1 All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off or tossed behind the line of scrimmage)
- 1.2 All players must be completely behind their side of the scrimmage neutral zone at the instant the ball is snapped, except the center. Violation of this procedure is an offside penalty.
- 1.3 Any number of players can be in motion when the ball is snapped; only the center must be at the line of scrimmage.  
Note: IFAF Flag 5v5 Flag Football Rules state that one player may be in motion, but not in motion towards the line of scrimmage at the snap.
- 1.4 Player out of bounds – if a player goes out of bounds, without interference, the player may not return to the field or catch the ball.



## Rule 12 – Rushing the Quarterback

### 1 Rushing

- 1.1 All players who rush the passer must be seven (7) yards for 5v5 and five (5) yards for 7v7 from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage. The rusher must rush continuously. Once the ball is handed off or tossed, or fake handoff, the seven or five yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage. A bean bag marked by the game official that will designate seven yards from the line of scrimmage.
- 1.2 A rusher lined-up within two (2) yards (side to side) of the seven (7) yard marker is entitled to a free rush at the quarterback – the rusher may not be interfered. If the rusher is lined up outside the two (2) yards (side to side) of the seven (7) yard marker, they are not entitled to a free rush at the quarterback and can be interfered.

## Rule 13 – Flagging

### 1 Flagging

- 1.1 To prevent the ball carrier from advancing, an opponent must pull off one or two flags without preventing the ball carrier to move forward. The ball is declared dead at this point. Once the defender has removed a flag, they are to remain in place hold the flag up for the referee to confirm the play has stopped and return the flag to the ball carrier. If a defensive player does not immediately return the flag back to the ball carrier, the official will issue a warning to the captain of the team at fault. If the situation repeats itself, no matter which player is involved, the official will issue an objectionable conduct penalty.
- 1.2 Defensive players are not allowed to pull an opponent's flag unless they are the ball carrier. A flag cannot be pulled until the ball carrier has the ball in their hands. The penalty, if the pass is complete results in an automatic first down 5 yards from where the ball is caught. If the play is incomplete, it is an automatic first down and the ball is placed 5 yards ahead of the previous line of scrimmage.
- 1.3 The officials will whistle when they see that a defensive player has removed (flagged) one of the flags of the ball carrier. If a ball carrier does not have all his or her flags, the player is deemed ineligible. If a flag is not placed correctly following a defensive player's intervention, the official may decide to let the play continue, or whistle the play down (flag protection penalty).
- 1.4 A pass receiver who loses a flag at the line of scrimmage can still receive a forward pass, but the ball will be declared dead at the point of reception. Players winding flags on belts will be warned the first time, next time removed from the game.

## Rule 14 – Passing

### 1 Pass

- 1.1 A pass is a ball thrown, bobbled, dropped, knocked or batted by a player in any direction; a ball that is bounced off a player in any direction is also considered to be a pass. A pass must be completed over the line of scrimmage.

### 2 Onside Pass

- 2.1 An onside pass is a ball that is propelled from a player's body towards that player's dead line or parallel to that player's dead line, regardless of how it was propelled.

### 3 Offside Pass

- 3.1 An offside pass is a ball that is propelled from a player's body towards the opponent's dead line.  
3.2 An offside pass is a loss of down.  
3.3 An offside pass is not legal even when it is touched

### 4 Forward Pass

- 4.1 A forward pass is a ball deliberately thrown by an offensive player towards the opponent's goal line.  
4.2 A forward pass is legal when it is thrown from behind the line of scrimmage. Any forward pass that violates these rules will be treated as an offside pass.

# Rule 15 – The Passing Game

## 1 Passing

- 1.1 The quarterback has seven seconds to throw the ball after receiving the snap. If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, the play is dead, with a loss of down and the ball is spotted five yards back from the previous line of scrimmage or half the distance to the goal line.
- 1.2 Once the ball is handed off or tossed or fake handoff, the seven second rule is no longer in effect.
- 1.3 Only one forward pass thrown is allowed in a down.
- 1.4 Interceptions change the possession of the ball.
- 1.5 Shovel passes are allowed but must originate from behind the line of scrimmage and be completed over the Line of Scrimmage (LOS).
- 1.6 Once a player catches the ball past the line of scrimmage, they are no longer allowed to lateral the ball. (5v5 only)
- 1.7 Interceptions can be returned by the defense.
- 1.8 On interceptions that occur and remain in the end zone, the ball becomes dead and turned over to the intercepting team at its 5-yard line. (7v7 goes to 10 yd. line)
- 1.9 Should an interception occur in the end zone and the ball carrier leave the end zone, the ball will belong to the intercepting team at the spot the ball becomes dead. However should the ball carrier return to the end zone and be deflagged or the ball becomes dead, except in the case of an inadvertent whistle, the result would be a safety for the other team.

## Rule 16 – Complete / Incomplete Passes

### 1 Complete Pass

- 1.1 A pass is completed when a receiver is in possession of the ball.
- 1.2 When an opponent causes the receiver to land out of bounds and, in the judgment of the officials, the receiver would have touched the ground in bounds without the opponent's action, the receiver will be considered to have landed in bounds.
- 1.3 When a receiver has control of the ball even for an instant, then loses control because of bodily contact caused by an opponent or the ground, the receiver will be awarded a complete pass.
- 1.4 A pass is ruled as complete to a receiver when an opponent is penalized for pass interference against that receiver.
- 1.5 When a player catches a pass tipped by a teammate, the pass completion is awarded to the player who caught the pass.

### 2 Simultaneous Possession

- 2.1 A complete pass caught simultaneously by teammates shall be awarded to the teammate who first touched the pass. A completed pass caught simultaneously by players on opposite teams shall be awarded to the player whose team had possession before the pass was caught simultaneously.

### 3 Tipped Pass

- 3.1 Tipped passes are legal. If the pass is an onside pass, the ball can be advanced when caught.

### 4 Bobbled Pass

- 4.1 If the player who caught the ball was the last player to tip the ball and had been flagged by an opponent after tipping the ball, the pass is considered complete and the ball is considered dead when the player was flagged.
- 4.2 When the ball carrier accidentally loses control of the ball, then catches it without the ball being touched by another player, the play continues. If the ball carrier was flagged by an opponent after losing control of the ball, the play is considered dead when the ball carrier was flagged.
- 4.3 When the ball carrier deliberately throws the ball into the air, then catches it to avoid being flagged, the ball is dead immediately.

### 5 Intercepted Pass

- 5.1 Any pass that is incomplete by the team in possession but caught by the opponents is an intercepted pass.

### 6 Incomplete Pass

- 6.1 Any thrown pass is incomplete and the ball is immediately dead when it touches the ground, the goal post or an official, or goes out of bounds before being caught.

### 7 Blocked or Deflected Forward Pass

- 7.1 A forward pass that is blocked by a rusher is considered to be an incomplete forward pass when it hits the ground. If the ball is caught, the appropriate offside/onside pass rules apply. The offense cannot throw a second forward pass; this will be ruled an offside pass. A deflected pass is ruled a regular forward pass playable by both teams.

### 8 Deliberate Grounding Pass

- 8.1 When the passer deliberately throws the ball out of bounds, or to an area where there is no receiver, in an obvious attempt to avoid a loss of ground, the passer will be penalized for grounding. (7v7 only)

## **9 Forward Pass vs. Dropped Ball**

- 9.1 When the passer attempts a forward pass and loses control of the ball after starting the passing arm in a forward motion and following through with the intended pass motion, the ball is dead when it hits the ground and the play is considered to be an incomplete forward pass.

If the forward motion of the throwing arm had not started when control of the ball was lost, the play is dead at that spot.

# Rule 17 – Pass Interference

## 1 Pass Interference

- 1.1 Pass interference occurs when a player takes away an opponent's positional advantage
- 1.2 Pass interference in the target area can apply when the pass is in the air and the player who had positional advantage had a reasonable chance of getting to the arrival point for the ball. When these two conditions do not apply, any pass interference that occurs will be considered to have occurred in the remote area.
- 1.3 Pass interference by the offence or the defense is illegal. The team that violates the pass interference regulations will be penalized as determined by the official.

## 2 Contact

- 2.1 A player has committed bodily contact when that player makes contact with an opponent and moves the opponent off stride or away from the opponent's intended direction or position. Contact between opponents is legal provided that the contact results from a simultaneous and legitimate attempt to play the ball and occurs at the arrival point of the pass; this contact is legal only when each player is intent on playing the ball and each player is in an equally favorable position to play the ball.
- 2.2 When contact occurs without moving the opponent of stride or away from the opponent's intended direction or position, pass interference has not occurred; this is incidental contact.

## 3 Path to the Ball

- 3.1 All players have an equal right to a direct path to the arrival point of the ball. However, a player in an unfavorable position cannot commit bodily contact with an opponent to reach the ball, even if the ball was eventually touched by that player.
- 3.2 A player who is in an equal or advantageous position to play the ball, compared to an opponent, is considered to have the right to the path of the ball. When that right is taken away by an opponent using bodily contact, pass interference has occurred.
- 3.3 A player, who is taking a path or a position on the field in order to catch a pass, or defend against a pass, has a right to that path or position unless an opponent has already taken it. A player who takes an opponent's established path or position using bodily contact is guilty of pass interference.
- 3.4 When two (2) opponents cross paths and make contact, the player who had clearly declared the intended path first has the right to that path; the opponent is guilty of pass interference unless the contact was incidental. If the officials cannot determine who declared their path first, pass interference has not occurred.
- 3.5 When opponents get their feet tangled up while running their respective paths causing one player to lose balance, a pass interference penalty is not automatic. The relevant positions and intended paths of the players must be taken into account.
- 3.6 In all the above cases, the player who is in the advantageous position to play the ball must continue to display intent to reach the arrival point of the ball. Otherwise, any contact by the opponent in a sincere effort to reach the arrival point of the ball will not be considered pass interference. A deliberate attempt to block the opponent from reaching the arrival point of the ball is pass interference.

## 4 Pick Play

- 4.1 An offensive player cannot prevent a defensive player from pursuing another offensive player by impeding that defensive player's direct path to the teammate. The defensive player must be moving towards the second offensive player to be considered pursuing that player.
- 4.2 If the first offensive player is playing the ball, that player cannot be considered as impeding the defensive player from pursuing the second offensive player.
- 4.3 Violation of these regulations is pass interference.

## **5 Stationary Position**

- 5.1 A defensive player who has maintained a stationary position since the ball was snapped shall not be penalized for pass interference if run into by an opponent.

## **6 Playing The Ball**

- 6.1 A player must be facing the ball as it arrives area to be considered to be playing the ball. When the ball strikes a player who is playing the ball and who is impeding an opponent's approach to the ball, this is pass interference; for the purposes of this regulation, the opponent must be moving towards the ball to be considered impeded.

## **7 Screening**

- 7.1 As the ball arrives in the immediate vicinity of a receiver, a player who is not playing the ball cannot extend the arms or wave a hand in an attempt to distract a receiver, to block a receiver's vision or to touch the ball. Violation of this rule is pass interference; if the ball is touched or the receiver's direct line of vision to the ball is blocked; this is pass interference.

## **8 Non-catchable Pass**

- 8.1 When an official considers a pass cannot be caught even with extraordinary effort, no pass interference penalty shall be assessed even when pass interference occurs by either team. Therefore no penalty call either way.



## Rule 18 – Sportsmanship / Roughing

### 1 Sportsmanship

- 1.1 Trash talking / taunting is illegal. (Trash talk is talk that may be offensive to officials, opposing players, teams or spectators.) If trash talking / taunting occurs, the referee will give a 15 yd unsportsmanlike penalty, loss of down or automatic 1st down on defence.
- 1.2 Shifting in a way that simulates the start of a play or employing any other unfair tactic for the purpose of drawing one's opponent offside. This can be constructed only as a deliberate attempt to gain an unmerited advantage.
- 1.3 Players cannot cross the line of scrimmage to listen to the opponents' huddle. Players cannot voice signals or make sounds that are intended to confuse the opponents' signals.
- 1.4 After the center sets the ball for the snap, a defender cannot move directly in front of the center and prevent the center from moving forward after the snap. Any defensive player must be at least three (3) yards from the center at the time of the snap if intending to assume a stationary position. Defenders can be 1yd from the center at the time of the snap within the no run zone.
- 1.6 Violation of these rules is an illegal procedure penalty.

### 2 Roughing

- 2.1 If the referee witnesses any acts of flagrant contact, tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game.
- 2.2 A player is not allowed to trip an opponent using the arm, lower leg or foot.
- 2.3 After the whistle is blown to indicate the ball is dead, a player is not allowed to run into, throw the body against or deliberately fall upon an opponent.
- 2.4 The ball carrier is not allowed to elbow, shoulder, or throw the body into an opponent or attempt to jump through defenders blocking the path.
- 2.5 A player is not allowed to contact the passer's arm in the throwing motion using bodily contact.
- 2.6 A player is not allowed to use bodily contact on a pass receiver before or after the ball is touched. If the bodily contact was caused by a legitimate attempt to catch or down the ball while both players had equally favorable positions to the ball, no foul has occurred.
- 2.7 A player is not guilty of contacting the receiver if the bodily contact was caused by a sudden stop or change in direction by the opponent and the player made every attempt to diminish the contact.

# Rule 19 – Illegal Acts

## 1 Use of Hands

- 1.1 Players cannot use their arms or hands to impede or redirect an opponent, except when that opponent obstructs their direct path to the ball carrier. Players cannot use the goal posts with their hands or arms to push off or to change direction. Violation of these rules is illegal use of hands.
- 1.2 When a player is playing the ball, an opponent can redirect that player with the hands in an effort to continue pursuing a direct path to the arrival point of the ball or the intended receiver.
- 1.3 Players may touch an opponent to feel their relative positioning as long as the opponent is not impeded or redirected. Players may touch the goal posts with their hands if such touching does not help them change their direction.

## 2 Obstruction

- 2.1 Obstruction is when a player impedes an opponent's direct path to the ball, the ball carrier or the intended receiver, with or without contacting the opponent.
- 2.2 A player may assume a stationary position if the intent is obviously to avoid obstructing an opponent. A player may cut across the path of an opponent if the opponent's progress is not impeded or redirected. Violation of these rules is an obstruction penalty.
- 2.3 When the ball carrier uses stationary teammates as a means of blocking the opponent from getting to the ball carrier, such stationary teammates are not to be penalized for obstruction unless they move from their spot. (Note: this rule does not apply to center/ rusher interference)

## 3 Illegal Re-entry

- 3.1 A player who steps out of bounds during the play cannot re-enter the field to play the ball, pursue a ball carrier or pursue an intended receiver. A player who is pushed out of bounds by an opponent or goes out of bounds as a result of a slippery field is not considered to have gone out of bounds unless that player makes not immediate effort to get back in bounds. Violation of these rules is an illegal re- entry penalty.

## 4 Illegal Participation

- 4.1 Once the ball is snapped a player cannot leave the bench area to enter the field and play the ball, pursue a ball carrier, pursue an intended receiver or obstruct a player; this rules also applies to fans and team members in or out of the team bench area. Violation of this rule is an illegal participation penalty.

## Rule 20 – Player Conduct

### 1 Rough Play

- 1.1 The following acts are defined and classified as Rough Play, and are illegal:  
The deliberate charging into an opposing player in such a way as to cause calculated injury. The striking of an opponent with the fist, heel of the hand, knee or elbow, or kicking an opponent. Any other act of roughness or unfair play considered by the Referee to warrant disqualification may be penalized under this section.
- 1.2 Penalty for Rough Play is disqualification (ejection) of the offending player, and L15 from the appropriate point. Loss of down if penalty is on an offense player. Automatic 1D to Team A for Team B Rough Play.

### 2 Unnecessary Roughness

- 2.1 Any act of roughness or unfair play that is committed by a player, not considered serious enough to disqualify, shall be penalized under this section.
- 2.2 Penalty for Unnecessary Roughness is L15 from the appropriate point. Loss of down if penalty is on an offense player. Automatic 1D to Team A for Team B Unnecessary Roughness.

### 3.1 Objectionable Conduct

- 3.1 The following acts are defined and classified as Objectionable Conduct, and are illegal:
- (a) The use of profane, obscene, insulting language or gestures to an opponent, official, spectator, or occupant of the team bench.
  - (b) Throwing the ball at an opponent, an official, or occupant of the team bench.
  - (c) Tactics by players, which delay or hinder the smooth operation of the game, shall be penalized under this section. These tactics include spiking the ball, and/or deliberately throwing or kicking the ball away after it has been declared dead on a play.
  - (d) Faking an injury or loss of balance in an attempt to delay the game or cause a Unnecessary Roughness penalty to be assessed against an opponent.
  - (e) Failure to wear mandatory equipment.
- Penalty: L5 from point where the ball would have been put into play if no other foul occurred. If the foul is of a serious nature, the player or occupant of the bench may be disqualified with no distance penalty.

### 4 Disqualification (Ejection)

- 4.1 A player or team member shall be disqualified from further participation in the game, with substitution permitted, if:
- (a) The player or team member has been called for Rough Play.
  - (b) The player or team member has been disqualified for Objectionable Conduct
- The disqualification penalty cannot be declined by the non-offending team.  
At the discretion of the Referee a disqualified player or team member may be allowed to remain on the bench.  
If the Referee does not permit the disqualified player or team member to remain on the bench they must leave the park.
- 4.2 If the disqualified player or team member does not leave the park within 3 minutes or leaves and returns during the game the Referee may award the game to the opponents of the offending team.
- 4.3 The Referee will take an official's time out while carrying out these procedures.

# Rule 21 – Penalties

## 1 Penalties

- 1.1 All penalties are 5 yards. The down will be repeated unless otherwise noted, and will be assessed from the line of scrimmage.
- 1.2 All penalties may be declined except for False Start and penalties for improper attire (dead ball fouls).
- 1.3 Penalties will not exceed half the distance to the opposing team's goal line from the line of scrimmage.
- 1.4 Game officials determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play. Except as noted most penalties will be applied from line of Scrimmage.
- 1.5 Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.
- 1.6 Penalties after an interception shall be assessed after the return is over and/or the play is blown dead.

## 2 Defensive Penalties

- 2.1 Offside – 5 yards
- 2.2 Substitution fouls – 5 yards. (player enters field after ball is blown dead ready for play, i.e. to deceive the opponents or 6 men on the field)
- 2.3 Disconcerting signals – 5 yards. (signals to distract/simulate offensive signals prior to snap)
- 2.4 Pass Interference will be 5 yards and automatic 1st down from point of foul.
- 2.5 Illegal rushing – 5 yards (7v7) (starting rush from inside 7-yard marker)
- 2.6 Interference – 5 yards and automatic first down.
- 2.7 Illegal contact – 5 yards Point of foul and automatic first down. (holding, blocking, etc)
- 2.8 Illegal flag pull – 5 yards and automatic first down. (before receiver has ball)

## 3 Offensive Penalties

- 3.1 Flag guarding – 5 yards.
- 3.2 Delay of game – 5 yards.
- 3.3 Substitution fouls – 5 yards.
- 3.4 False start – 5 yards (cannot be declined).
- 3.5 Illegal snap – 5 yards
- 3.6 Offensive holding – 5 yards.
- 3.7 Diving / jumping to avoid being flagged – 5 yards Point of foul
- 3.8 Player out of bounds – 5 yards (if player goes out of bounds by his own cognisense, player cannot return to the field and catch the ball).
- 3.9 Illegal forward pass – 5 yards and loss of down. (a second forward pass or after the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage)
- 3.10 Offensive pass interference – 5 yards and loss of down. (pushing off/away defender)
- 3.11 Running inside a no running zone is a loss of down at the previous spot.
- 3.12 Rusher interference – 5 yards and loss of down.

## 4. Other

- 4.1 Objectionable Conduct minor infractions – 5 yards
- 4.2 Major Fouls / Unsportsman like conduct – 15 yards automatic 1st down for offence

## **Rule 22 – Tournament Tie Breaker System**

### **1 Tie Breaker System**

In any contest, the final score may result in a tie. If a winning team is deemed necessary, then overtime shall be played. Procedures for 5v5, see page 41 and for 7v7, see page 47)

In a round robin tournament, the winner is that with the best record in the end.

If teams are tied with the same record, then the teams may play a head to head contest to determine the tournament winner.

Alternatively, the winning team may also be judged by the total point accumulation of a team in the entire season if applicable (for league tournaments).

## **Rule 23 – No Run Zone**

### **1 No Run Zone**

- 1.0 If a run happens in the No Run Zone, the play will be whistled dead and the penalty is a loss of down.
- 1.1 Once in the No Run Zone you can no run until you get a first down outside the No Run Zone or score a touchdown.
- 1.2 Fake handoff or play action fakes will be penalized as misleading tactics in the No Run Zone.

# The Canadian Rule Book for 5vs5 Flag Football

## 5v5 Rule 1 – Field

### 1 Field

1.1 Field Diagram – recommended field markings

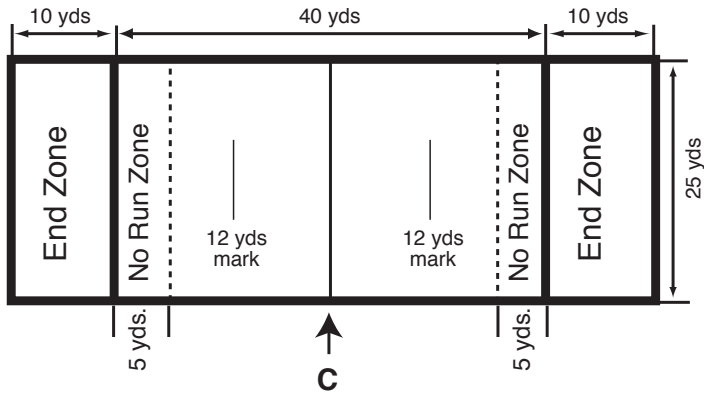
1.2 Field Dimensions:

Length: 40 yards - U16 and younger (50 yards - U18 and older) (Goal line to goal line)

Width: 25 yards

End Zones: Maximum 10 yards deep

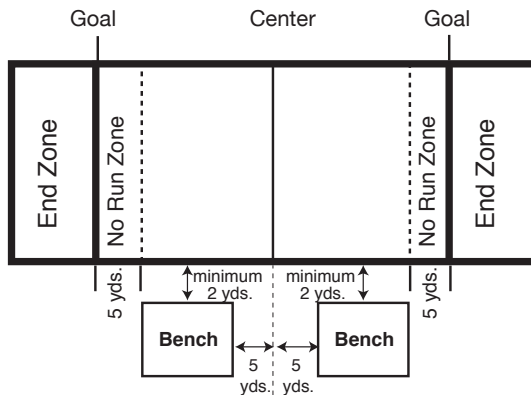
No Run Zones: within 5 yards of each goal line.



### 1st Down

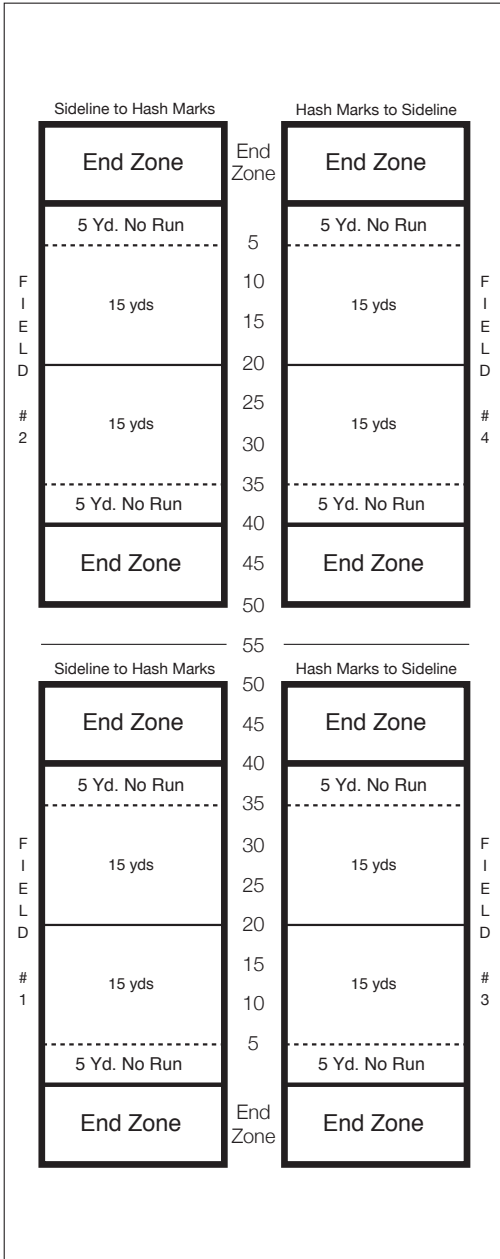
### 2 Bench Area

Bench Areas are to be located on the same side of the field and shall extend from 5 yards short of the end zone to 5 yards short of the center line. They shall be a minimum of 2 yards from the edge of the field and shall be a maximum of 10 yards in depth.

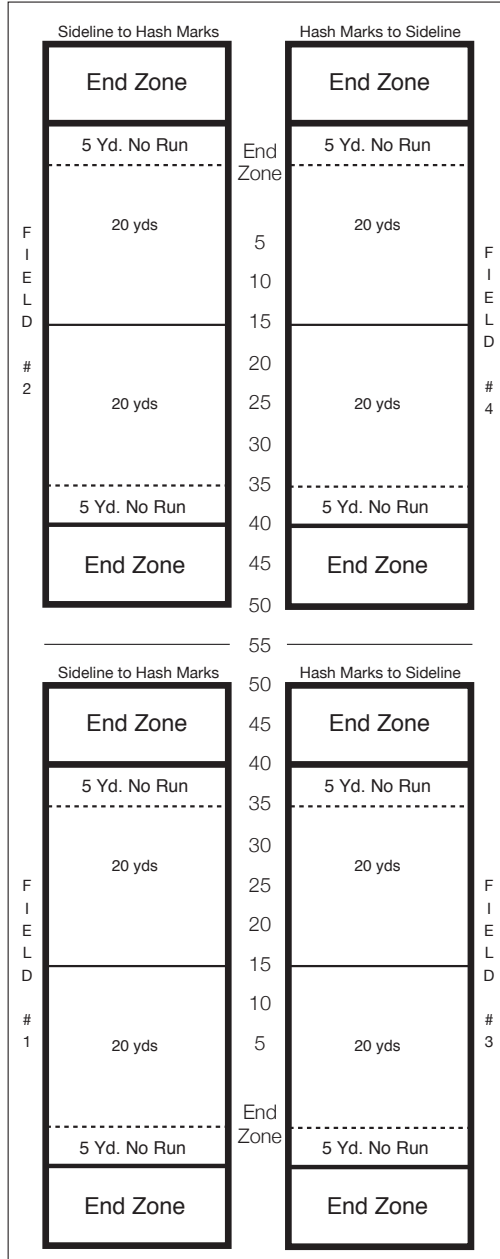


**3 Suggested field configuration for tournament play**

**4 Fields — 40 x 25 Layout  
(U16 & Younger)**



**4 Fields — 50 x 25 Layout  
(U18 & Older)**





## 5v5 Rule 2 – Team Members

### 1 Players

- 1.1 Teams need a minimum of four (4) players to be able to compete and a maximum of five (5) players on the field at any given time. The official roster size will depend on the guidelines set forth by leagues, national and international tournaments.
- 1.2 A team may have a maximum of five (5) players on the field during a play.  
A team may use a minimum of four (4) players during a play. A team which has more than five (5) players on the field at any time, while the ball is live shall be penalized for illegal substitution.
- 1.3 A team must have a minimum of four (4) players and a maximum of five (5) players on the field at the scheduled time or be penalized for delaying the start of the game. The team will forfeit the game by a score of 1-0 if they do not have a minimum of four (4) players and a maximum of five (5) players on the field within fifteen (15) minutes of the schedules start of the game.
- 1.4 When a team refuses to start or continue a game at the request of the Referee, it will be penalized for delaying the game. On the third refusal, the team will forfeit the game by a score of 1-0; if the non-forfeiting team is in the lead at this point, the score will stand.

### 2 Captains

- 2.1 Each team is permitted a maximum of 2 team captains

# 5v5 Rule 3 – Game Procedure

## 1 General Rules

- 1.1 The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has three (3) plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three (3) plays to score a touchdown. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on its 5-yard line.
- 1.2 To begin a play, the ball must be snapped by the offensive center, from the point of scrimmage to the quarterback. There is no minimal distance required by the quarterback who can be either up close to the center or in shot-gun formation.
- 1.3 An automatic first down by penalty will overrule the other requirements regarding three (3) plays to make either a first down or score.  
Note: In Canadian Flag Rules there are three (3) plays to cross mid-field or score a touchdown, while in IFAF Flag 5v5 Rules used in international competition, there are four (4) plays to cross mid-field or score a touchdown.
- 1.4 If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its 5-yard line.
- 1.5 All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offensive 5- yard line.
- 1.6 If an offensive penalty passed midfield occurs, which causes the ball to be placed behind midfield marker, the offensive team must still make a touchdown in 3 plays.
- 1.7 “No-running zones,” are located five (5) yards in front of each end zone. When the ball is on or inside the 5-yard line going towards the opponent’s end zone, the ball carrier cannot run across the line of scrimmage. (no running plays)
- 1.8 The passer cannot run with the ball past the line of scrimmage, unless the ball has handed, tossed or pitched to another player and it has been returned.
- 1.9 Once the ball carrier has crossed the line of scrimmage the ball cannot be handed off, tossed, pitched or passed in any way.
- 1.10 An offense may use multiple handoffs behind the line of scrimmage. Only backward & lateral handoffs are allowed during the down.
- 1.11 Forward pass – Ball must be on or beyond the line of scrimmage to be legal.
- 1.12 There are no kickoffs in the game of 5v5 flag football.
- 1.13 Teams change ends zones at half time.

## 2 Bean Bags

- 2.1 Two (2) bean bags are needed. One to indicate the line of scrimmage and another to indicate the rusher’s line. An option is to have a third bean bag to mark where the play is dead.

## 5v5 Rule 4 – Scoring

### 1 Obtaining Points

- 1.1 Touchdown: 6 points
  - Extra point: 1 point. (Played from midpoint of 5-yard line only)
  - Extra point: 2 points (Played from midpoint of 12-yard line only)
  - Safety: 2 points

Note: An interception returned to opponent's end zone on any extra point play by the defense will result in the defense scoring 2 points plus possession for next series at its 5-yard line.

### 2 Convert

- 2.1 A team scoring a convert from the 5 yard line is awarded one (1) point. A team scoring a convert from the 12 yard line is awarded two (2) points. When a penalty affects the normal point of scrimmage of a convert attempt, the awarding of one (1) or two (2) points will be based on where the original convert attempt was scrimmaged prior to any penalty application or repeated convert attempt.
- 2.2 A convert is scored when a player has legal possession of the ball the in the opponent's end zone during a convert attempt.
- 2.3 If the team chooses the additional point from five (5) yards, this is within the "no-running zone" and the ball must be thrown.

### 3 Safety Touch

- 3.1 A team scoring a safety touch is awarded 2 points
- 3.2 A team scores a safety when their opponents cause the ball to be brought into their end zone and the ball is ruled dead in the end zone before they can bring it out legally, or the ball is considered to have not left the end zone.
- 3.3 A safety touch is not awarded when a player's momentum, while intercepting a pass in the field of play, causes the ball to be brought into the end zone, where it is eventually ruled dead; the intercepting team shall be awarded a first down at the point of interception.

## 5v5 Rule 5 – Timing / Over Time

### 1 Timing

- 1.1 Game length is 40 minutes. (2 x 20 minute halves)
- 1.2 2 minute warning will be provided to both teams but time will continue to run except for injuries & timeouts.
- 1.3 Period for half-time will be 2 minutes.

### 2 Over Time

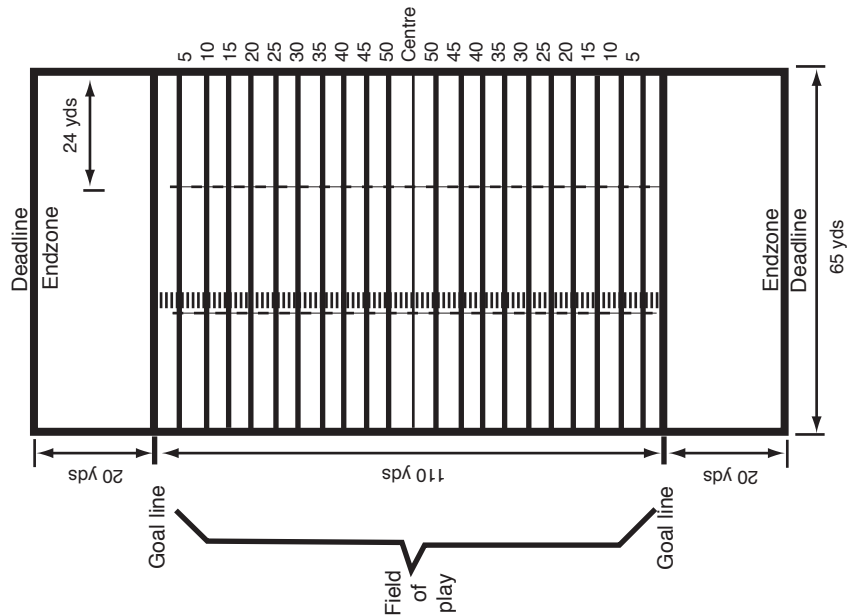
- 2.1 The team winning the coin toss starts with the ball on the midline.  
Each team has three attempts to score after which the other team gets three attempts from the midline. If the score is still tied after each team has used their attempts, both teams start again from the midline and try to score. Extra-points after the score are played as in regulation time. Except when the score is tied after 2 attempts by both teams, they have to play their extra point tries from the 12-yard line. Turnovers end the team's attempts and can be returned for a score.
- 2.2 Each time the ball is spotted the offense has 30 seconds to snap the ball.

# The Canadian Rule Book for 7v7 Flag Football

## 7v7 Rule 1 – Field

### 1 Field Definition and Markings

- 1.1 The field of play shall be 110 yards long by 65 yards wide. In addition there shall be an end zone 20 yards long at each end. These areas shall be marked as shown in the field diagram.



- 1.2 Sidelines – lines marking the sides of the field.
- 1.3 Hash marks – Two series of hash marks, parallel to the sidelines and running the length of the field from one goal line to the other. Each hash mark is 24 yards from the nearest sideline. The ball must always be snapped between these two lines.
- 1.4 Goal Lines – the lines marking the end of the field.
- 1.5 End Zone – the area bounded by the goal line, end zone sidelines and dead line. The goal line is part of the end zone.
- 1.6 Field of Play – the area bounded by the goal lines and the sidelines.
- 1.7 The following lines are parallel to the goal lines, running from one sideline to the other, on either side of the midfield line:
- Midfield Line at 55 yards – runs parallel to the goal lines and divides the field of play in two identical sections.
  - Dead Line – the line 20 yards behind each goal line and parallel to it.
  - Kick-off line at 45 yards to start at half and after a touchdown. Kick-off line is used after a safety and single point.
  - Starting line at 10 yards of scrimmage after an interception inside the end zone.
  - Convert Line for 2 points at 10 yards.
  - Convert Line for 1 point at 5 yards.

## 2 Field Dimension & Measurements

2.1 All measurements are in yards and taken from the inside of the lines.

	Ideal Field	Other Options
Field Width	65	Minimum 50
Length of Playing Field	110	Minimum 90
Length of End Zone	20	Minimum 10
Hash Marks (from sidelines)	24 yard line	20 yard line
Midfield line	55 yard line	Midfield
Kick-off line to start a half and after a touchdown	45 yard line	10 yards away from midfield line
Kick-off line used after a safety or a single point	35 yard line	20 yards away from midfield line
Starting line of scrimmage after an interception inside the end zone	10 yard line	10 yard line
Convert line for 2 pts	10 yard line	10 yard line
Convert for 1 pt	5 yard line	5 yard line

## 7v7 Rule 2 – Team Members

### 1 Players

- 1.1 Teams need a minimum of six (6) players to be able to compete and a maximum of seven (7) players on the field at any given time. The official roster size will depend on the guidelines set forth by leagues, national and international tournaments.
- 1.2 Each team may have a maximum of seven (7) players on the field during a play. A team may use a minimum of six (6) players during a play. A team which has more than seven (7) players on the field at any time, while the ball is live shall be penalized for illegal substitution.
- 1.3 A team must have a minimum of six (6) players and a maximum of seven (7) players on the field at the scheduled time or be penalized for delaying the start of the game. The team will forfeit the game by a score of 1-0 if they do not have a minimum of six (6) players and a maximum of seven (7) players on the field within fifteen (15) minutes of the scheduled start of the game.
- 1.4 When a team refuses to start or continue a game at the request of the Referee, it will be penalized for delaying the game. On the 3rd refusal, the team will forfeit the game by a score of 1-0; if the non-forfeiting team is leading at this time the score will stand.
- 1.5 A player is eligible to play, if he/she has arrived prior to the 2nd half kick-off.

### 2 Captains

- 2.1 Each team is permitted a maximum of 4 team captains

# 7v7 Rule 3 – Game Procedure

## 1 General Rules

- 1.1 The game starts with a kick-off (one team kicks the ball to the opposing team). The receiving team becomes the offensive team and the kicking team becomes the defensive team.
- 1.2 To begin a play, the ball must be snapped by the offensive center, from the point of scrimmage to the quarterback. The quarterback must be at least five (5) yards from the line of scrimmage when they first touch the ball.
- 1.3 The offensive team tries to bring the ball to the opponent's end zone by passing or running it (touchdown or kick). The offensive team has 3 tries or downs to gain 10 yards and complete 1 pass. If they succeed, the offensive team has earned a 1st down and gets another set of 3 downs to move the ball downfield. If they do not score or get a 1st down, the offensive team loses possession of the ball and becomes the defensive team.
- 1.4 If the offensive team thinks that they will not get a 1st down, they can decide to give the ball back to the opponent by kicking the ball to them, as far away as possible from their own end zone.
- 1.5 The defensive team on the field tries to prevent the offense from scoring or getting a first down. To do so, they have to stop the ball carrier by flagging him or her or by knocking down a pass before it is completed.
- 1.6 When the defensive team succeeds in preventing the offense from getting a first down or by intercepting a pass, the teams exchange roles on the field. Offense becomes defense and vice versa.
- 1.7 A defensive team can also score points. If the offensive team is stopped in its own end zone, the defense scores a safety. If the defensive team intercepts a pass and runs the ball back to the opponent's end zone, they score a touchdown.
- 1.8 The team that scores a touchdown gets an extra down to try to score a convert: they can choose to try and score either 1 or 2 points on a convert.
- 1.9 After the convert, play resumes with a kick-off by the scoring team (now the defensive team) who will try to prevent the opponent from scoring or getting a 1st down during their ball possession.
- 1.10 The quarterback can run with the ball past the line of scrimmage.
- 1.11 Once the ball carrier has crossed the line of scrimmage the ball can be handed off or lateraled.
- 1.12 An offense may use multiple handoffs behind the line of scrimmage. Only backward & lateral handoffs are allowed during the down.
- 1.13 Forward pass – Ball must be thrown from behind the line of scrimmage to be legal.

## 2 Choice of Kick-Off

- 2.1 For the first half, the captain of the visiting team shall choose to kick off, receive the kick or defend an end of the field. The captain of the home team shall then choose one of the two remaining choices.
- 2.2 For the 2nd half, the captain of the home team shall choose to kick off, receive the kick off or defend an end of the field. The captain of the visiting team shall then choose one of the two remaining choices.
- 2.3 After the captain's choice has been given by the Referee to the opposing captain, the choice cannot be changed.

## 3 Down

- 3.1 After the ball becomes dead on a kick off, the team in possession shall be awarded a first down and will have three (3) attempts or downs to gain 10 yards. The ball shall be advanced by carrying it or throwing it using legal scrimmage play. If the offense gains the required distance in the series of three (3) downs, a first down is awarded again.
- 3.2 If the required distance for a first down is not gained in the three (3) attempts, the ball is awarded to the defense at the point where the ball becomes dead after the third attempt.



- 3.3 The Referee is the sole judge as to whether or not a first down has been gained by the offense. The captain of either team may ask for a measurement, but the Referee has the authority to ignore the request if the Referee is convinced that a correct decision can be made without the aid of measurement.

#### **4 Equipment**

- 4.1 The kicking tee must not raise the lowest part of the ball more than two (2) inches off the ground. The penalty is illegal procedure. The kicking team is responsible for removing the kicking tee from the field after the play is dead. Failure to do so will result in an objectionable conduct penalty against the team.

#### **5 Bean Bags**

- 5.1 Three (3) bean bags are needed. One to indicate the line of scrimmage and another to indicate the 5 yard rusher's line. A third bean bag of a different color is needed to mark the first down.

# 7v7 Rule 4 – Timing / Overtime

## 1 Timing

- 1.1 The game is divided into 4 periods called quarters.
- 1.2 Not counting time outs, the 1st and 3rd quarters consist of 15 minutes.
- 1.3 After 10 minutes of play in the 2nd and 4th quarters (not counting time outs), the referee informs both teams that 2 minutes remain before the last 5 plays of the quarter. Following the three minute warning signal (not counting time outs), the referee informs both teams that only 5 plays remain before the end of the half. These 5 plays do not include converts, kick-offs or downs replayed because of a penalty.
- 1.4 The time clock starts on the referee's whistle at the beginning of play in each quarter. The time clock runs continuously except during time outs and the last 5 plays of a half. Otherwise, the time clock can only be stopped and restarted on the head referee's signal.
- 1.5 During the last 5 plays of the 4th quarter, the head referee can stop the game if he or she feels that the security of the players is compromised.
- 1.6 Each half will begin with a kick off from the kicking team's 45 yard line.  
The 1st and 3rd quarters will end when no time remains in the period when the ball becomes dead at the end of a legal play.
- 1.7 At the start of the 2nd and 4th quarters, the teams will change ends. The ball will be put into play by the team entitled to do so, at the appropriate point determined by the end of the last play of the previous quarter.
- 1.8 A half shall end when no time remains in the period when the ball becomes dead at the end of a legal play.
- 1.9 The clock must be stopped if the ball falls off the kicking tee.
- 1.10 When a touch down is scored on the final play of a period, the convert attempt must be completed before that period is considered completed.

## 2 Overtime

- 2.1 When the score is tied at the end of the game, overtime procedures are as follows:
  - A 3-minute rest period is allowed at the end of the 4th quarter;
  - Team captains will assemble for a coin toss (like pre-game); the winner of the coin toss chooses to start on offense or on defense.
  - Each team has 3 attempts to score a 1 or 2 point convert, at their convenience.
- 2.2 If the score is still tied after the 3 convert attempts have been played on each side, there will be a 1-minute rest period. Each team will then have one chance at another convert attempt (in the same order) until one team outscores the other.

## 3 Changing Sides

- 3.1 At the end of the 1st and 3rd quarter, the two teams change sides on the field.
- 3.2 The team in possession of the ball will then restart the next play at a point corresponding exactly to the point where the ball became dead at the opposite end of the field, and in exactly the same manner as if play had not been interrupted by the end of the previous period.

## 4 Half Time

- 4.1 At the end of the 2nd quarter, a 5 minute rest period is allowed. With the approval of the captains on both teams and the head referee, the length of the half time period can be modified.

# 7v7 Rule 5 – Scoring

## 1 Obtaining Points

1.1 Touchdown – 6 points; Safety – 2 points

1.2 Single:

A team scores a single (1 point) when one of the players kicks the ball:

- Inside the opponent's end zone and the play is whistled dead or the ball goes through the end zone or crosses the back line.

*or*

- Inside the opponent's end zone and the ball leaves the end zone by crossing the sideline.  
Exception: on a kick-off, the ball must first touch the ground inside the playing field before a single can be awarded.

1.3 A team that has conceded a single will take possession of the ball on their own side of the field, 20 yards from midfield, between the 2 hash marks.

# 7v7 Rule 6 – Kicking Game (U-17 + up)

## 1 Kicking

- 1.1 A kicked ball is one struck by a player's foot or leg below the knee to intentionally give possession of the ball to the opposing team.
- 1.2 Three types of kicks exist in 7v7 flag football for divisions U-17 and higher. They are: kick-off, punt and free-kick.
- 1.3 When the ball contacts a foot or part of a leg of a player while a team is trying to gain possession and is not intentionally kicking the ball, it is considered not to be a kick and the ball is treated as a lateral pass with applicable rules.

## 2 Immunity

- 2.1 The first player to touch the ball kicked by the opponent (returner) has a 5 yard immunity area: no player on the kicking team (including the kicker) can be inside the 5 yard area when the returner touches the football for the first time. Infractions result in a penalty for not respecting immunity (penalty with options; see different types of kicks). If a player from the kicking team touches the ball first, the ball is whistled dead and the immunity rule is in effect, even if no player from the receiving team is closer than the 5 yard area.

## 3 Kick Off

- 3.1 The kick-off is executed as the 1st play to start a half or after a touchdown. It can also be executed after a safety.
- 3.2 On kick-offs that occur after a touchdown to start a half; the football is placed between the hash marks on the side of the field of the kicking team, 10 yards away from midfield. For kick-offs after a safety, the ball is placed 20 yards away from midfield, between the hash marks and on the side of the field of the kicking team. The application of penalties can modify the placement of the football.
- 3.3 During a kick-off, the ball may be placed on the ground, held by another player, or it can be placed on a kicking tee. If placed on the tee, the football must not be more than 2 inches off the ground. A procedure penalty may be called for infractions. The team executing the kick-off is responsible for removing the kicking tee from the field once the ball is whistled dead. The team receiving the kick provides the football.
- 3.4 A huddle is not mandatory for a kick-off. The kicking team has 20 seconds after the official's whistle to kick the ball. Once the time has expired, the official will stop the play and give a penalty for delay of game. If there is a second penalty for delay of game, the opposing team will take possession where the ball was spotted. After the penalty for delay of game, the official must inform both teams of the implications of a second penalty for delay of game.
- 3.5 Once the official has whistled the start of the 20 seconds, no player, either on offense or defense, may enter the field (penalty for illegal substitution). The official will make sure there are 7 players on the field for each team. A team that takes too much time to line up 7 players on the field for kick-off will receive a penalty for delay of game.
- 3.6 The receiving team on a kick-off can execute a forward pass.

## 4 Offside on a Kick Off

- 4.1 Neutral zone: the neutral zone is the area between the kick-off line, the line 20 yards in front of the kick-off line and the 2 sidelines.
- 4.2 At the exact moment when the ball is kicked, all players on the kicking team (except for the holder) have to be behind the ball (if not, penalty for offside: 5 yard penalty and re-kick, or the receiving team may decline the penalty and take the ball at the point where the play stopped).
- 4.3 Until the ball is kicked, players on the receiving teams must remain on their side of the neutral zone (if not, penalty for offside: 5 yard penalty and re-kick or kicking team may decline the penalty and the receiving team takes possession of the ball at the point where the play stopped).

## 5 Kick Off Out of Bounds

- 5.1 A kick-off is out of bounds when:
- The ball goes out of bounds without touching the playing surface or end zone, any player or goal post;
  - The ball goes out of bounds by crossing the sidelines of the field of play after touching the playing field, but without touching a player or the goal post;
  - An out of bounds kick-off brings a penalty (with options).
- 5.2 Unless it is touched by a player on the receiving team, the ball must travel at least 20 yards (with or without any bounce) towards the opponent's end zone (if not, penalty for illegal procedure – 5 yards with options).

## 6 Kick Off Penalties

- 6.1 Delay of game on a kick-off: no options
- Kicking line moved back 10 yards and re-kick by the team at fault
  - 2nd consecutive infraction by the kicking team: lost of possession at the kicking line.
- 6.2 Offside on kick-off: options for team not at fault
- Kicking line is moved 5 yards back towards the team at fault and re-kick;
  - Penalty is declined and the possession of the ball is taken at the spot where the ball whistled dead.
- 6.3 Kick-off out of bounds: options for the receiving team
- Kicking line is moved 5 yards back towards the team at fault and re-kick;
  - Receiving team take possession of the ball 25 yards from the kicking line;
  - Receiving team take possession at the point where the ball went out of bounds.
- 6.4 No yard rule on a kick-off: options for team not at fault
- Kicking line is moved 5 yards back towards the team at fault and re-kick;
  - 15 yard penalty starting at the point of infraction and ball possession for the receiving team.
  - Penalty is declined and the possession of the ball is taken at the spot where the ball was whistled dead.
- 6.5 Illegal substitution on a kick-off: options for team not at fault
- Kicking line is moved 10 yards back towards the team at fault and re-kick;
  - Penalty is declined and the possession of the ball is taken at the spot where the ball was whistled dead.

## 7 Punting

- 7.1 A punt is executed to give possession of the ball to the opponents by pushing them as far back as possible into their zone. A punt can be executed at any time, on any down and without being announced.
- 7.2 A punt must be executed behind the line of scrimmage.
- 7.3 A punt is executed by a player who receives the ball by the center, then releases the ball with the hands to kick it before it touches the ground. After the snap from the center, the punter is the only player allowed to touch the ball before the kick (if not, penalty for illegal procedure).
- 7.4 During a punt, the procedures of punting the ball in play are the same as for a normal offensive play. Also, a minimum of 5 players must be on the LOS and no player of the kicking team is allowed to cross the LOS before the ball is kicked (if not, penalty for illegal procedure).
- 7.5 If the kicked ball is falling in an area where there are many players, the official can whistle the play dead while the ball is coming down. The ball becomes officially dead at the spot where the ball made contact with the ground or a player. The “no yard” rule doesn't apply.
- 7.6 If a punt goes off the field by crossing a sideline inside the playing surface, the ball will be spotted at the exact yard line where it went out. If it goes off the field inside the end zone, then the rules of a single will apply.
- 7.7 During a punt, the receiving team cannot execute a forward pass.

## **8 Roughing The Kicker**

- 8.1 A judgment has to be made by the official when contact is made with the kicker. Voluntary and deliberately violent contact made with the kicker results in a roughing the kicker penalty. Accidentally contact or one that is made with the attempt to avoid contact by the defender will result in a penalty for contacting the kicker.

## **9 Punt that does not Cross Line of Scrimmage/ Goal Line**

- 9.1 The ball is dead when it touches the ground, a player or if it goes out of bounds. The “no yard” rule does not apply.
- 9.2 Punt that does not cross the goal line: when a punt is executed from the team’s own end zone and it does not cross the goal line, a safety will be awarded to the receiving team.

## **10 Tipped Punt**

- 10.1 A tipped punt is a kicked ball touched by a player (offense or defense) immediately after being kicked, before it crosses the line of scrimmage and still continues its path towards the opponent’s end zone. A tipped punt is considered an untouched ball.
- 10.2 If the ball crosses the LOS, all the rules of punting apply. If it doesn’t cross the LOS, the ball will be dead the moment it touches the ground, a player, or goes out of bounds. The receiving team will then take over possession of the ball at the point where the ball was whistled dead. The “no yard” rule does not apply.

## **11 Blocked Punt**

- 11.1 A blocked punt is kicked ball touched by a player (offense or defense) immediately after being kicked, before it crosses the line of scrimmage and does not continue its path towards the opponent’s end zone. The “no yard” rule does not apply.
- 11.2 If the ball touches the ground or goes out of bounds, the play is dead. The receiving team gets possession of the ball at the point where it was blocked.

## **12 Blocked Punt Recovered**

- 12.1 When a blocked punt is recovered by the kicking or receiving team, the ball remains in play. When the kicking team recovers the blocked punt, continuation of the play is considered normal – the team may kick, pass or run the ball.
- 12.2 If a punt is blocked or tipped by the receiving team inside the end zone of the kicking team, and the ball does not cross the goal line or goes out of bounds inside the end zone, the receiving team scored a touchdown.

## **13 Punt Penalties**

- 13.1 No yard rule: options for the team not at fault
- 15 yard penalty from the point of infraction and 1st down is awarded;
  - Penalty is declined and ball is spotted at the point where the play was stopped.
- 13.2 Illegal procedure on a punt: options for the team not at fault
- Loss of 5 yards for kicking team and re-kick.
  - Penalty is declined and ball is spotted at the point where the play was stopped.
- 13.3 Contact with the kicker
- 10 yard penalty from the LOS and replay down for the kicking team; if the yards gained by the penalty are sufficient, a 1st down is awarded to the kicking team.
  - Penalty is declined and ball is spotted at the point where the play was stopped.
- 13.4 Roughing the kicker
- 15 yard penalty and automatic 1st down for the kicking team.

## 14 Free Kick

A kick executed by a player after the ball has crossed the LOS.

14.1 The free kick is executed and is governed by the same rules as a punt.

*Exceptions:*

- All players can kick the ball;
- The rule of not crossing the LOS before the ball is kicked does not apply; the players of the kicking team are free to move, but the no yard rule for the returner is in effect.
- A free kick can be executed from behind the LOS only if the ball had previously crossed the LOS and came back behind it afterwards; otherwise the kick becomes a punt and punting rules apply.
- If a blocked free kick is recovered by the kicking team, forward passes are not allowed.
- A tipped free kick is a free kick touched by an opponent immediately after being kicked and still continues its path towards the opponent's end zone. The player who tipped the ball had to be within 5 yards of the kicker when he tipped the ball. A tipped free kick is considered an untouched free kick.

## 15 Punt/ Place Kick

15.1 The ball is dead after a punt when it touches the ground behind the line of scrimmage or snapped, and there is no play on the ball by either team.

15.2 The ball is dead after a punt when it touches the ground after being muffed in an offside direction by any player of the receiving team at any time. The ball is dead after a punt when it is downed by a player of the punting team. In all these cases, a ball touching any person or object out of bounds shall be considered to have touched the ground.

15.3 The ball is dead immediately after a punt or place kick on a convert attempt.

## 16 Kick Off

16.1 The ball is dead after a kick off when it is downed by the kicking team.

## Adapted Rules

Flag football can be adapted for teams of individuals with disabilities. The game is played as outlined in the 5v5 rules and adaptive methods of play are as follows:

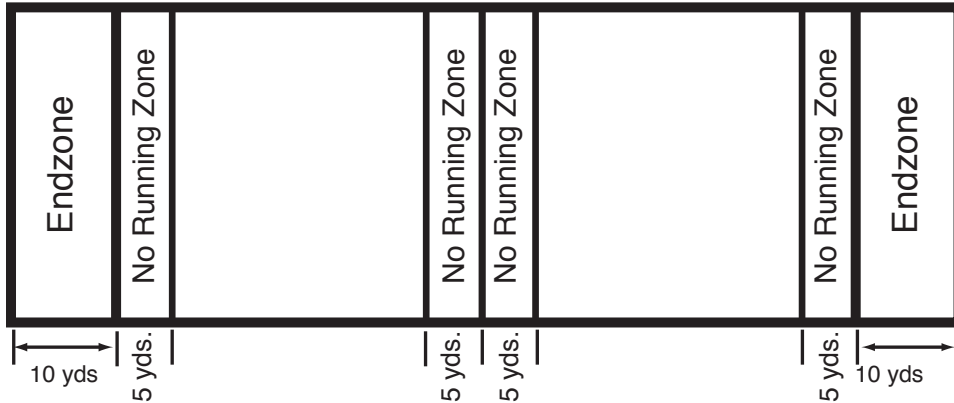
### 1 Field

#### Standard outdoor field

Standard length: 60 or 80 yards

Standard width: 30 or 20 yards

No Running Zone: Within 5 yards of end zone



### 1st Down

#### Adapted

No Running Zones: 5 yards from each goal line and 5 yards before the mid-field line. Any ball snapped from these zones must be passed.

\*Purpose of the “No Running Zones” is to avoid short yardage power runs that can get out of control.

Flag football can be played by athletes using wheelchairs or other mobility assistive devices inside or outside on a flat surface such as parking lot or basketball court.

#### 2.1 When using a gymnasium, the boundaries for basketball work well.

Each team begins at the foul line and has 3 plays to cross the center line to make a first down.

Field size should correspond on the skill level of the athletes and number of participants. It is necessary to routinely evaluate play and make adjustments as necessary.



## 2 Players

### Standard:

Minimum Players: 4

Players per Roster: 6

Players on field: 5

### Adapted (recreation):

Adapted teams likely will increase team roster to 10 to 15 players and play with 5 to 10 on the field. The organizers can set the number of players on the field to reflect level of participants. For league or routine games, organizers may choose to trade players in order to balance teams.

### Competitive Adaptation for Unified Sports Teams

- 2.1 The roster size is to be determined by the individual organizer (i.e. Special Olympics)
- 2.2 The roster may include able-bodied “partners” who play alongside an athlete with a physical or intellectual disability.
- 2.3 Athletes and partners must be similar in age and skill.
- 2.4 In the Unified Sports guidelines, when a partner is passing the football, another partner is ineligible to receive the pass.

## 3 Game Procedures

### Standard Snap

To begin a play, the ball must be snapped through the legs of the offensive center, from the point of scrimmage to the quarterback. There is no minimal distance required by the quarterback who can be either up close to the center or in shot-gun formation.

### Adapted

The Center can toss the ball back to the Quarterback without snapping the ball between his/her legs. The Quarterback can start the play with ball in possession.

### Standard Downs

In Canadian Flag Rules there are three (3) plays to cross mid-field or score a touchdown, while in IFAF Flag 5v5 Rules used in international competition, there are four plays to cross mid-field or score a touchdown.

The number of downs can be altered based on the skill level of the athletes, number of participants and size of the playing surface.

### Standard Quarterback Run

All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offensive 5- yard line.

### Adapted

Possession changes start on 10 yard line.

### Standard Time

The quarterback cannot run with the ball past the line of scrimmage, unless the ball has handed, tossed or pitched to another player and it has been returned.

### Adapted

The quarterback may never run the ball.

## Standard

Teams change end zones at half time (after 20 minutes has been played).

## Adapted

Consider the age and skill level of participants, number of participants and the size and quality of playing surface to set the time of game

## 4 Player Equipment

### Standard Flag Placement

A flag is place on each hip

### Adapted

A flag is placed n the back of wheelchair with Velcro

### Standard Ball per age group:

U-11      Wilson K2

U-13      TDJ

13+      TDY

### Adapted Ball

Gripper ball for any players with limited dexterity

One ball size smaller than standard for age group otherwise

## 5 Earning Points

### Standard Points

Touchdown: 6 points

1 point conversion      (Played from midpoint of 5-yard line only)

2 points conversion      (Played from midpoint of 10-yard line only)

2 points awarded for a safety

### Adapted

Limit option to 1 point conversion only with or without the no running zone.

For wheelchair ball, two wheels must be in the end zone while the player has possession of the ball to score any points.

A safety touch is not awarded when a player's momentum, while intercepting a pass in the field of play, causes the ball to be brought into the end zone, where it is eventually rules dead; the intercepting team shall be awarded a first down at the point of interception.

## 6 Timing

### Standard Tim

Game length is 40 minutes. (2 x 20 minute halves)

Time allowed for half-time break is 2 minutes.

### Adapted

5 or 10 minute half time

## 7 Wheelchair Safety

The need for contact in flag football is eliminated with the use of flags. Incidental contact between wheelchairs will occur and is part of the game, but flagrant attempts to hurt an opponent using a wheelchair will not be tolerated.

- 7.1 Dangerous contact such as hitting another player from behind is not permitted. This is referred to as spinning where an athlete strikes an opponent's wheelchair behind the main axis causing it to spin.

- 7.2 Direct physical contact between athletes is not permitted and is referred to as illegal use of hands or reaching in.
- 7.3 Holding, where an athlete uses their hands, arms or falling into an opponent is not permitted.
- 7.4 It is recommended that all wheelchairs be equipped with spoke protectors and anti-tip device at the back.
- 7.5 All wheelchairs must be equipped with adequate strapping to hold the athletes securely in place during the activity and to maintain good seating position.

# Appendix 1

## 1 Skill Building

The following games are designed for athletes new to flag football. The focus is on fundamentals: throw, catch, flag pulls.

The games can be set up as a skills competition, where the athlete's final score is determined by adding all the scores together.

Suggested space for these games is 20 yards by 20 yards

## 2 Catching

### Purpose

To measure the athlete's ability to run a route and catch a football.

Equipment needed includes 4 woose markers and 2 footballs

Four woose markers will be set up in a 5 yard square. The athlete begins at one corner, runs straight ahead and around the woose marker, then runs diagonally down to the corner woose marker and then heads straight for the final marker. The athlete will run a capital "N" shape and will receive the ball at the last woose marker. Depending on the skill level of the thrower, they can be placed at the marker beside the athlete for a short pass or at the same marker for a longer diagonal pass. Each athlete will complete the whole activity three times.

A total of 24 points can be awarded for this station after 3 attempts:

- 5 points for catching the ball
- 2 points for blocking or knocking the ball down
- 1 point for each of the two cones successfully reached
- 1 point for reaching the final marker for the catch
- 0 points for missed attempts

## 3 Throwing

**Purpose:** To measure the athlete's ability to throw a football accurately and for distance.

Equipment needed includes 2 woose markers, 3 hoola hoops and 5 footballs.

The athlete being tested stands in the start box that is 1 yard by 1 yard set up behind the first hoola hoop and attempts to get the football in one of the targets.

The targets are placed 2 yards, 5 yards and 10 yards away from the 'start' box on a diagonal

Each athlete has 3 trials with 5 attempts in each trial.

A total of 45 points can be awarded for this station for all 3 trials:

- 10 yard target is 3 points
- 5 yard target is 2 points
- 2 yard target is 1 point
- 0 points for missing a target

#### 4 Throwing for Distance

**Purpose:** To measure the athlete's ability to throw a football for distance.

Equipment needed includes 2 woose markers, 5 footballs and long measuring tape.

The athlete begins behind the start line, with enough room to be able to take a one or two steps in preparation of throwing.

The athlete has 5 attempts to throw the football as far as possible without stepping over the start line.

Additional coaches or non-participating players mark where each football first touches the ground and the longest distance of 5 attempts is measured for the score.

If the athlete steps over the line, they have a maximum of 2 repeat attempts.

The athletes' score is the longest of the 5 attempts.

#### 5 Flag Pulling

**Purpose**

To measure the athlete's flag pulling ability.

Equipment needed includes 8 woose markers, 3 sets of cloth flags, 1 stop watch and 3 volunteers.

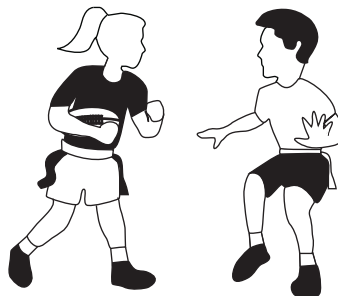
The athlete will begin at the starting line marked by the woose markers and run to the three volunteers wearing the cloth flags. The volunteers will be standing 2 yards apart, 10 yards from the start line.

The athlete will run to the first volunteer, remove a flag and run back to the start line to drop the flag.

This will be repeated for two more times.

This event will be scored by time:

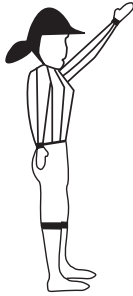
- 10-15 seconds = 20 points
- 16-20 seconds = 18 points
- 21-25 seconds = 16 points
- 26 - 30 seconds = 14 points
- 31-35 seconds = 12 points
- 36-40 seconds = 10 points
- 41-45 seconds = 8 points
- 46-50 seconds = 6 points
- 51-55 seconds = 4 points
- 56 seconds and up = 2 points



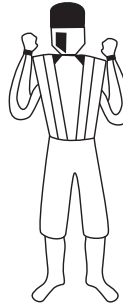
## Officials' Signals



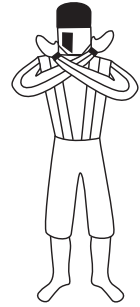
**1 Team Time Out**  
T sign with hands



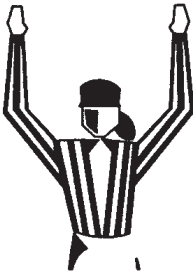
**2 First Down**  
One arm pointing forward



**3 Second Down**  
Hands upright at shoulder level



**4 Third Down**  
Arms crossed at chest level



**5 Touchdown or 2 Pt. Convert**  
Both arms extended above head



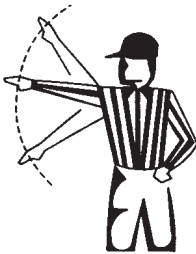
**6 Safety Touch**  
Hands together above head



**7 Single Point**  
One arm extended above head



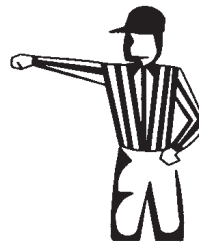
**8 Offside**  
Hands on hips



**9 Clock Starts**  
Full arm circles to simulate clock



**10 Clock Stops**  
Hands criss-crossed above head



**11 Personal Foul**  
Either arm extended sideways with closed fist



**12 Major Foul**  
Chopping left wrist



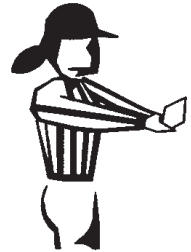
**13 Objectionable Conduct**  
Waving hand behind back



**14 Pass Interference**  
Pushing forward from shoulders



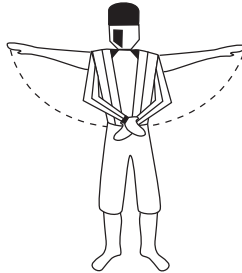
**15 Illegal Use of Hands**  
Grasping wrist at chest level



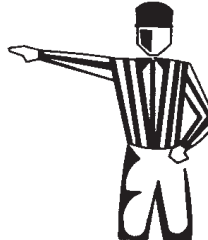
**16 Obstruction**  
Arm extended and grasp wrist



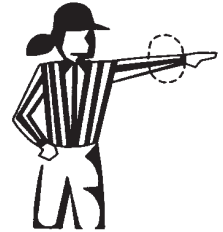
**17 Procedure**  
Hands rotated in forward motion



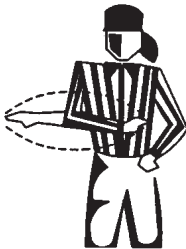
**18 Incomplete Pass**  
Shifting arms in horizontal plane



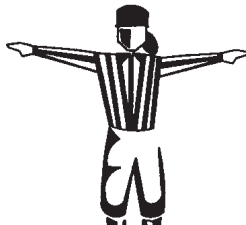
**19 Direction of Pass**  
Hand pointing to direction pass was thrown



**20 Time Count Violation or Delay of Game**  
Arm in circular motion



**21 Offside Pass**  
Horizontal arc with either hand



**22 Illegal Re-entry**  
Both arms extended sideways



**23 Illegal Substitution**  
Hand patting on top head



**24 Penalty Declined**  
Shifting arms at knee level



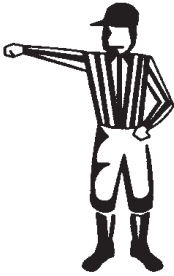
**25 Official's Time Out**  
Both hands placed on chest



**26 Ejection**  
Saluting motion



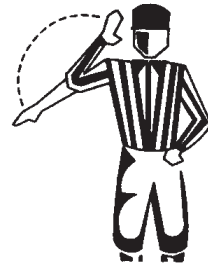
**27 Dead-Ball Foul**  
One arm extended overhead with palm open



**28 Roughing Kicker**  
Personal Foul Signal  
Either arm extended sideways with closed fist.



Leg raised about 6" of the ground. Arm pointing down towards foot.



**29 Roughing the Passer**  
Personal Foul Signal +  
Arm raised above head in a passing motion.