



CYSA - NFL Flag Rules

I. GAME

1. At the start of each game, captains from both teams meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who starts with the ball. The visiting team calls the toss. (When starting a game, it is important to check in all of the players. Make sure each player is wearing their NFL Flag jersey and that it is tucked in. Check that flags are on properly. Soccer-type cleats are allowed. Check all players for jewelry, watches, etc. NO JEWELRY IS ALLOWED (NO EARRINGS).
2. The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense. The loser of the coin toss has the choice of direction. Possession changes to start the second half to the team that started the game on defense.
3. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four (4) downs to cross line to gain. Once a team crosses the line to gain they get a new set of downs. The line to gain in AFC is the next full cross-field line. The NFC must get to the centerline and then has 4 downs to score a touchdown. (Indoor uses the Mac lines, starting spot is the near side penalty line)
4. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts its drive on its own 5-yard line.
5. Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.

II. TERMINOLOGY

Boundary Lines The outer perimeter lines around the field. They include the sidelines and back of the end zone lines.

Line of Scrimmage (LOS) an imaginary line running through the point of the football and across the width of the field.

Line-to-Gain The line the offense must pass to get a first down or score.

Rush Line An imaginary line running across the width of the field seven yards (into the defensive side) from the line of scrimmage.

Offense The team with possession of the ball.

Defense The team opposing the offense to prevent it from advancing the ball.

Passer The offensive player that throws the ball and may or may not be the quarterback.

Rusher The defensive player assigned to rush the quarterback to prevent him/ her from passing the ball by pulling his/her flags or by blocking the pass.

Live Ball Refers to the period of time that the play is in action. Generally used in regard to penalties. Live ball penalties are considered part of the play and must be enforced before the down is considered complete.

Dead Ball Refers to the period of time immediately before or after a play.

Whistle Sound made by an official using a whistle that signifies the end of the play or a stop in the action for a timeout, halftime or the end of the game.

Inadvertent Whistle Official's whistle that is performed in error.

Charging An illegal movement of the ball-carrier directly at a defensive player who has established position on the field. This includes lowering the head or initiating contact with a shoulder, forearm or the chest.

Flag Guarding An illegal act by the ball-carrier to prevent a defender from pulling the ball-carrier's flags by stiff arm, lowering elbow or head or by blocking access to the runner's flags with a hand, arm or ball.

Shovel Pass A legal forward pass across the LOS underhand, backhand or by pushing the ball forward.

Lateral A backward or sideway toss of the ball by the ball-carrier. Unsportsmanlike Conduct A rude, confrontational or offensive behavior or language.

III. ELIGIBILITY

1. All players must be registered with CYSA and NFLFlag.com. Coaches will confirm this.

IV. EQUIPMENT

Players must wear shoes. Soccer cleats are allowed at MLMS and the Mac. However, cleats with exposed metal are never allowed and must be removed.

Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads and knee pads. Braces with exposed metals are not allowed.

Players must remove all jewelry, hats and do-rags. Winter beanies are allowed.

Players' jerseys must be tucked into shorts or pants if they hang below the belt line.

We recommend players wear shorts or pants that do not have pockets. Shorts or pants with belt loops or pockets must be taped. Games will not be delayed for a player to tape up pockets.

V. FIELD

1. The field dimensions are approx. 30 yards by 70 yards with two 10-yard end zones, and a midfield line-to-gain. (indoor at the McDonald Center will use white sidelines and goal lines as painted)
2. No-run zones precede each line-to gain by 5 yards. This is for the NFC/AP only. The AFC will not enforce this rule. (indoor no run zone starts at the center circle for midfield and the penalty spot for the end zone)
3. No-run zones are in place to prevent teams from conducting power run plays. While in the no-run zones (a 5-yard imaginary zone before midfield and before the end zone), teams cannot run the ball in any fashion. All plays must be pass plays, even with a handoff. NFC teams must use a pass play within 5 yards of their side of the midfield line and within 5 yards of the opponent's end zone. (the end zone they are attacking)
4. Stepping on the boundary line is considered out of bounds. STEPPING ON A SIDELINE/GOAL LINE/MIDFIELD LINE is considered "over the line."

VI. ROSTERS

1. Home Teams wear your dark color. Visiting team wear your white color if there is color clash (2 blue teams etc). If teams are distinctly different colors both may wear their bright color.
2. All games will be 8v8 in AFC and 7 v 7 in NFC/All Pro divisions.
3. If a team is in need of players in order to play full strength a coach can agree to "share" players in CYSA.
4. If a team is short players and there are no other available players, please play to that level (6v6 etc)

VII. TIMING AND OVERTIME

1. Games will last for one hour split into 2 time periods. The referee is responsible for keeping the time and calling for the halftime period and the end of the game.
2. Halftime will be 5 minutes.
7. Referees will keep score, but scores will not be advertised. A game may end in a tie. There will be no overtime in CYSA.

VIII. SCORING

1. Touchdown: 6 points
2. PAT (point after touchdown) 1 point (5-yard line) or 2 points (10-yard line) a. Note: 1 point PAT is pass only; 2 point PAT can be run or pass.
3. Safety: 2 points (A safety occurs when the ball-carrier is declared down in his/her own end zone.)
4. Runners can be called down when their flags are pulled by a defensive player, a flag falls out, they step out of bounds, their knee or arm touches the ground, a fumble occurs in the end zone or if a snapped ball lands in or beyond the end zone.
5. A team that scores a touchdown must declare whether it wishes to attempt a 1-point conversion (from the 5-yard line) or a 2-point conversion (from the 10-yard line). Any change, once a decision is made to try for the extra point, requires a charged timeout. A decision cannot be changed after a penalty.
6. Extra points that are returned equals 2 points
7. Since we do not keep an official score, we will not use the Mercy Rule or Scrimmage Mode. However, in a lopsided scoring situation, we urge coaches to make player substitutions and adjustments to allow a losing opponent to challenge more effectively.

IX. COACHES

1. Coaches will be allowed on the field between plays, however they must be off the field/well behind the play before the 30 second delay of game time is up.

X. LIVE BALL/DEAD BALL

1. The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.
2. The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage. a. It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on defense or offense enters the neutral zone. In regard to the neutral zone, the official may give both teams a “courtesy” neutral zone notification to allow their players to move back behind the line of scrimmage.
3. A player who gains possession in the air is considered inbounds as long as one foot comes down in the field of play.
4. The defense may not mimic the offensive team signals by trying to confuse the offensive players, while the quarterback is calling out signals to start the play. This will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.
5. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
6. Any official can whistle the play dead.
7. Play is ruled “dead” when:
 - a. The ball hits the ground. (If the ball hits the ground as a result of a bad snap, the ball is then placed where the ball hit the ground.) (indoor the ball is dead if it hits the ceiling or any netting)
 - b. The ball-carrier’s flag is pulled.
 - c. The ball-carrier steps out of bounds.
 - d. A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored.
 - e. The ball-carrier’s knee or arm hits the ground.
 - f. The ball-carrier’s flag falls out.
 - g. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one or no flag(s).
 - h. The 7 second pass clock expires.
 - i. Inadvertent whistle. (The team in possession at the time of the whistle can take the result of the play when the whistle blew or replay the down.)

NOTE: There are no fumbles. The ball becomes a dead ball. (If the ball is fumbled forwards then it will be spotted where the ball carrier lost possession.)

8. If an inadvertent whistle occurs with no time left on the clock at halftime or end of game, the team in possession when the whistle sounded will have one untimed down. The offense has two options: a. Take the ball where it was when the whistle blew, and the down is consumed. b. Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage
9. Coaches can use a time-out to clarify a ruling. If the ruling is correct (BE SURE TO HAVE YOUR RULES HANDBOOK!) the team will be charged their timeout. If the ruling on the field was incorrect, the time out will not be charged and the correct ruling will be enforced. Referees should discuss the call amongst themselves and check the Rules Handbook.

XI. RUNNING

1. The ball is spotted where the ball is when the flag is pulled.
2. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball. The quarterback is the offensive player who receives the snap.
3. Only handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Handoffs may be in front, behind or to the side of the offensive player but must be behind the line of scrimmage. The offense may use multiple handoffs. a. "Center sneak" play is no longer allowed. The QB is not allowed to handoff to the center on the first handoff of the play.
4. Laterals are allowed behind the line of scrimmage. They are not allowed after a pass downfield is made.
5. No-run Zones are located 5 yards before each end zone and 5 yards on either side of midfield are designed to avoid short-yardage power-running situations. NFC teams are not allowed to run in these zones if the subsequent line is LIVE.
6. Any player who receives a handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
7. Once the ball has been handed off in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
8. Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding.
9. Spinning/Jump Cuts are allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a flag pull. a. Players spinning out of control will be called for flag guarding.
10. Runners may leave their feet if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid collision with another player without a flag guarding penalty enforced.
11. No blocking or "screening" is allowed at any time. Once a pass is thrown downfield or a runner crosses the line of scrimmage all offensive players must cease trying to run with the play. No screening the downfield ball carrier.
12. Offensive players without the ball must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. No running with the ball-carrier.
13. Flag obstruction – All jerseys MUST be tucked in before play begins. The flags must be on the player's hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.

XII. PASSING

1. All passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage. a. All passes that do not cross the line of scrimmage, whether received or not, are illegal forward passes. b. The quarterback may throw the ball away to avoid a sack. Pass must go beyond the line of scrimmage.
2. Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
3. The quarterback has a seven-second "pass clock." If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, the play is dead, the down is consumed and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off, the 7-second rule is no longer in effect. a. If the QB is standing in the end zone at the end of the 7-second clock, the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage (LOS).

XIII. RECEIVING

1. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
2. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. All motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted toward the line of scrimmage.
3. A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.
4. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
5. Interceptions are returnable on conversions after touchdowns (2 points)

XIV. RUSHING THE PASSER

1. All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of ten yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback can defend on the line of scrimmage.
2. Once the ball is handed off, the ten-yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
3. A special marker, or the referee, will designate a rush line ten yards from the line of scrimmage. Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play. a A legal rush is: i. Any rush from a point 10-yards from the defensive line of scrimmage. ii. A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off by the quarterback. b. A penalty may be called if: i. The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff or pass – illegal rush (5-yards from the line of scrimmage and first down). ii. Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped – offsides (5-yards from line of scrimmage and first down). iii. iv. Any defensive player not lined up at the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed or handed off – illegal rush (5-yards from the line of scrimmage and first down). c. Special circumstances: i. Teams are not required to rush the quarterback with the seven second clock in effect. ii. Teams are not required to identify their rusher before the play.
4. Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however, contact to the QB, unless ruled incidental by the official, would result in a roughing the passer penalty.
5. The offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has the right to a clear path to the quarterback, regardless of where they line up prior to the snap. If the “path or line” is occupied by a moving offensive player, then it is the offense’s responsibility to avoid the rusher. Any disruption to the rusher’s path and/or contact will result in an impeding the rusher penalty. If the offensive player does not move after the snap, then it is the rusher’s responsibility to go around the offensive player and to avoid contact.
6. A sack occurs if the quarterback’s flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball will be spotted where possession of the ball is once the flag is pulled. a. A Safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team’s end zone

XV. FLAG PULLING

1. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball-carrier is in full possession of the ball.
2. Defenders can dive to pull flags but cannot tackle, hold or run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.
3. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball-carrier's possession at any time.
4. If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during the play, the player is down immediately upon possession of the ball and the play ends. The ball is placed where the flag lands.
5. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball.
6. Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball-carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the head, hand, arm or shoulder or intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey.

XVI. FORMATIONS

1. Offenses must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage (the center) and up to four players on the line of scrimmage. The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.
2. One player at a time may go in motion 1-yard behind and parallel to the line of scrimmage. b. No motion is allowed toward the line of scrimmage.
3. Movement by a player who is set or a player who runs toward the line of scrimmage while in motion is considered a false start.
4. The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between or beside his/her legs to a player in the backfield, and the ball must completely leave his/her hands.

XVII. UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

1. If the field monitor or referee witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the referee's discretion. No appeals will be considered. FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!
2. Offensive or confrontational language is not allowed. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.
3. Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach or official.
4. Ball-carriers MUST make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.
5. Defenders are not allowed to run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.
6. Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship as well: a. Yell to cheer on your players, not to harass officials or other teams. b. Keep comments clean and profanity free. c. Compliment ALL players, not just one child or team.
7. Fans are required to keep fields safe and kids friendly: a. Keep younger kids and equipment such as coolers, chairs and tents a minimum of 10 yards off the field in the end zone area. b. Dispose of ALL trash in designated trash cans.
8. Unsportsmanlike conduct penalties:
 - a. Defense + 10 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
 - b. Offense - 10 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down

XVIII. PENALTIES

KNOW THESE FOULS AND PENALTIES!!! You may want to shrink this page and laminate it onto an index card to keep in your pocket for quick reference.

ii. Defensive spot fouls

Defensive pass interference	Automatic first down
Holding	+5 yards and automatic first down
Stripping	+10 yards and automatic first down

iii. Offensive spot fouls

Screening, blocking or running with the ball	-10 yards and loss of down
Charging	-10 yards and loss of down
Flag guarding	-10 yards and loss of down

iv. Defensive penalties

Defensive unnecessary roughness	+10 yards and automatic first down
Defensive unsportsmanlike conduct	+10 yards and automatic first down
Offside	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Illegal rush <small>(Starting rush from inside 7-yard marker)</small>	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Illegal flag pull <small>(Before the receiver has the ball)</small>	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Roughing the passer	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Taunting	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down

v. Offensive penalties

Offensive unnecessary roughness	-10 yards and loss of down
Offensive unsportsmanlike conduct	-10 yards and loss of down
Offside / false start	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal forward pass <small>(Any pass received or lands behind the line of scrimmage or throwing a pass after crossing the line of scrimmage)</small>	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Offensive pass interference	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal motion <small>(More than one person moving)</small>	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Delay of game	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Impeding the rusher	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal Procedure	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down