



2026 ACYA FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

The Basics

- A coin toss determines first possession. There are NO kickoffs.
- Games are played with two halves of 25 minutes each with a running clock. There will be a 10 minute halftime.
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield (the 20 yard line), it has four more plays to score a touchdown. The end zones are 10 yards deep.
- If the offense fails to cross midfield or score, the ball changes possession and the opposing team takes over on its own 5-yard line.
- ALL possession changes start on the offensive team's 5-yard line. The one exception is a Defensive Interception (forward or backward lateral) may be advanced for a TD. If the Interception is not advanced for a TD, the change starts on the offensive team's 5-yard line.
- A team that scores a safety also gets possession on its 5-yard line.
- There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where it hits the ground, and the offensive team retains possession unless that play was fourth down. If the ball is fumbled in or batted into the end zone, it is spotted at the 1 yard line.

Players

- Teams will field seven players at all times.
- Rotation: All players must play an equal amount of plays during the game.

Scoring

- Touchdown: 6 points
- Extra points:
 - 1 point (played from 5-yard line),
 - 2 point (played from the 10-yard line),
 - 3 point (played from the 20-yard line)
- Safety: 2 points

Receiving

- There must be a center/quarterback exchange to start the play and the snap must go between the center's legs (either under center or via direct snap). If the ball is dropped, the QB may pick it up and continue on with the play. All players must be set (not in motion) when the ball is snapped.
- All players (including the quarterback if the ball has been passed or handed off behind the line of scrimmage) are eligible to receive passes and handoffs.
- Shovel passes are allowed.

- There can be multiple passes on a given play as long as there is only one forward pass per play.

Running

- The QB cannot run with the ball across the line of scrimmage unless another player has touched the ball first (and handed it back off to the QB).
- Offense may use multiple handoffs before crossing the line of scrimmage.
- The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball has been snapped, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- The ball is spotted where the ball carrier is when the flag is pulled, not where defender who pulled the flag is standing. Please encourage the kids not to dive head first with the ball.
- Blocking is allowed - keeping hands behind the players back to establish position with no contact. Think basketball screening in a football setting.

Dead Balls

- Substitutions may be made at any time.
- Play is ruled "dead" when:
 - Ball carrier's flag is pulled or "flag guarding" is called
 - Ball carrier steps out of bounds
 - Ball carrier's knee hits the ground
 - Ball carrier's flags fall off and is touched by a defensive player
 - Offense fumbles (except on the Center/QB exchange)

Defense/Rushing

- All defensive players must be a minimum of five yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush.
- A special marker should designate five yards from the line of scrimmage.
- When a ball is inside the defense's 5-yard line, the defense can line up on the goal line (do not have to be five yards back)

Defense Penalties:

- Offside: 5 yards and replay the down
- Interference: 5 yards and automatic first down
- Tackling: 5 yards on first offense, 5 yards and first down on second offense and ejection after third repeated offense.
 - The defender may not assert intentional, body to body contact ("tackling") on the ball carrier when attempting to pull a flag and make a tackle. The defender should try and use a reach technique, as opposed to a face-to-face encounter, to limit contact as much as we can. If a defender is broken down squarely in front of the runner, then the runner should be the one to make a move to go around the defender, trying to avoid contact and not running over the defender. Any incidental contact in this scenario would not be a penalty on the defense.

Offense Penalties:

- Illegal forward pass (pass thrown beyond line of scrimmage): 5 yards and loss of down
- Flag Guarding (ball carrier uses free hand to stiff arm or to prevent flag from being pulled): play is dead, and ball is placed 5 yards from spot of foul.

Sportsmanship

- If the field monitor witnesses any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped, and the player may be ejected from the game.
- FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.