



# **RULE BOOK**

**2026**

## 2026 Rule Change Quick Reference

- Page 4 – Safety and Medical Coverage – new section*
- Page 7 – Game Schedule – Regular Game Schedule – G, H & I*
- Page 8 – B & C Playing Rules – D*
- Page 10 – B & C Playing Rules - Mandatory Plays and Monitoring*
- Page 11 – B & C Playing Rules – Scoring 40 Point Rule*
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- Page 15 – Miscellaneous Rules – Adult Conduct - E & F*
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## **WELCOME TO OUR PROGRAM**

The Finger Lakes Youth Football and Cheerleading League, Inc. would like to welcome you to our program. It is our hope that you will find this a positive and rewarding experience. Our constructive program is designed to teach the fundamentals of football and cheerleading to all boys and girls who meet age, weight, and health requirements.

This program is designed for participation. With the growing trend in youth sports programs to “win at all costs”, we feel it necessary to have a program with participation, education, and fun.

Every eligible team member who has learned his/her assignments shall play/cheer in every game. This will ensure that all children have fun, and it will fulfill each child’s natural desire to compete.

The FLYFCL By-Laws provide additional regulations and requirements in addition to the rules outlined in this book.

### **2026 FLYFCL MEMBER TEAMS:**

4TCC	JORDAN-ELBRIDGE	PORT BYRON
CAZENOVIA	LYONS	RED JACKET
CLYDE- SAVANNAH	MARCUS WHITMAN	SKANEATELES
EAST ROCHESTER	MIDLAKES	SOUTHERN HILLS
GANANDA	NEWARK	SYRACUSE
GENEVA	PAL-MAC	WAYNE
HONEOYE FALLS-LIMA	PENN YAN	WATERLOO

## **SAFETY AND MEDICAL COVERAGE**

- A. A coach or board member possessing the required First Aid, CPR, and AED training certification must be present at all practices, scrimmages, and games for both football and cheerleading activities.
- B. While the presence of an individual possessing the certification for the First Aid, CPR and AED training meets the minimum league requirement, it is strongly recommended that teams provide medical coverage beyond specified certification whenever possible. This may include, but is not limited to, a licensed athletic trainer, a certified emergency medical technician (EMT), a paramedic, a dedicated ambulance service or medical professional with advanced training beyond basic First Aid, CPR and AED.
- C. The presence of an ambulance or licensed medical professional with advanced medical training is strongly recommended to enhance emergency response capabilities, including but not limited to serious injury, concussion management, heat-related illness, or other medical emergencies.
- D. Any injury that occurs to an individual who is currently listed on a certified roster during a FLYFCL event (practice, game, scrimmage, competition, etc.) will be documented on the FLYFCL Accident Report form and submitted to [info@flyfcl.com](mailto:info@flyfcl.com) within 48 hours of the injury. Any serious injury requiring a 9-1-1 call, will need to be reported to a member of the Executive Committee as soon as possible. Filing a claim through FLYFCL Insurance will require additional documentation and forms to be completed.
- E. Responsibility for compliance shall rest with the Team President, Football Director in conjunction with the Player Safety Coach.

## **FOOTBALL POLICY & PROCEDURES**

### **Player Roster and Eligibility**

- A. 'B' teams shall have a maximum membership of forty (40) players. 'C' squad roster shall have a maximum membership of forty-five (45) players providing that at least one qualified Assistant Coach or helper is available for each 11 players. There shall be no roster limits for Flag teams.
- B. Grade Requirements
  - Flag: Kindergarten, 1st & 2nd grades
  - C Team: 3rd & 4th grades
  - B Team: 5th & 6th grades
- C. Player league grade is based on the upcoming school year.
- D. Players are ineligible to play down to a lesser grade level with the exception of flag.
- E. Only 3<sup>rd</sup> graders may play down to flag.
- F. Players are eligible to play up one age or grade level with parent and club approval.

- G. No Player will be eligible if in high school.
- H. Revised team rosters are required to be submitted to FLYFCL for any changes to rosters after certification.
- I. A player may participate in a second sport, except (Football), provided they meet all practice requirements for both "FLYFCL" and the other organization.

## Coaches

- A. Each class within a team shall have a Head Coach, who will be responsible to the President, or any other official to whom that responsibility is delegated by the President.
- B. Each class within a team shall have no more than one (1) Head Coach, four (4) Assistant Coaches, and at each team's discretion there shall be no more than three (3) helpers on the sidelines during any scheduled game, at no time is this figure to exceed eight (8) Coaches/Helpers on the sidelines. These numbers do not include individuals acting as Spotters, Monitors, or Medical Personnel.
- C. Recommended Coaches
  - 11-40 players: 3-4 coaches
  - 41-45 players: 4-5 coaches
- D. Player Safety Coach (PSC) – Each club shall have a PSC. PSC is responsible for overseeing the organization's implementation of Heads-Up Football®. A PSC attends a one-day training clinic with USA Football, ensures all coaches are certified, holds in-person clinics for Head Coaches, attends practices and games and serves as the organization's expert and point of contact for player health and safety. USA Football recommends that a PSC does not have team coaching responsibility. This position's profile melds the roles of coaching mentor and parent liaison, specifically for Heads Up Tackling<sup>SM</sup>, Heads Up Blocking and other player safety matters.
- E. Head Coach - The Head Coach shall have the responsibility of coaching his team, and of supervising the Assistant Coaches. There shall be only one Head Coach for each class. If a Head Coach is between the ages of 18 - 21 years of age, and of unquestionable moral character there will be an adult advisor present at all times. The Head Coach shall serve without compensation. The Head Coach may be appointed or removed by the President or his delegate at their discretion, with the advice and consent of the Team Board of Directors as specifically provided in the rules. Head Coaches must be certified with USA Football.
- F. Assistant Coach - Each class within a team shall have no more than four (4) Assistant Coaches who will be responsible to the Head Coach, and work under his direction. They must be of unquestionable moral character and shall serve without compensation. They may be appointed or removed by the President or his/her delegate at their discretion with or without the recommendation of the Head Coach and with the advice and consent of the Board of Directors of the team. Assistant Coaches must be certified with USA Football.
- G. Helpers - Each team may carry as many helpers as they deem necessary as long as these helpers are registered with "FLYFCL, INC". Each team may register persons in the category of Ball Boy/Girl, Water Boy/Girl, and Team Mom/Dad etc. Helpers do not need to be certified with USA Football

- H. Two coaches may be present on the game field to organize and quickly provide guidance to their players during the progress of a class “C” game. Class “B” coaches are not allowed on the playing field other than during timeouts. On field coaches must in no way continue to coach, assist, influence, or interfere with the progress of play once the players are set and play has begun. Coaches must be five (5) yards behind the deepest player or at the back of the end zone at the snap of the ball.
- I. Only the Head Coach may request an interpretation of an Official’s ruling during games.

## **Practice Sessions**

- A. Practice sessions within the meaning of these rules are any meeting of the players for their physical or mental training in football fundamentals and practice.
- B. Practice sessions shall begin no earlier than the first Monday – 4 weeks prior to the first regular season scheduled game and conclude no later than December 31 of the same year.
- C. All sessions must conform to the following requirements:
  - 1. There must be a minimum of ten (10) hours of conditioning practice before the first participation in any physical contact with other players. All players must have their physical requirements completed before the start of conditioning.
  - 2. A physician or person holding a current Red Cross first aid card must be present at all sessions.
  - 3. All players must wear adequate protective equipment whenever physical contact is involved. \*NOTE! - During the required ten (10) hours of conditioning, Head Coaches have the option of having players wear helmets and/or shoulder pads.
  - 4. Practice sessions will be limited to not over ten (10) hours per week prior to the first game, and not over six (6) hours per week after the first game. \*NOTE! - It is recommended by the League that teams schedule a minimum of four (4) hours of practice in any week prior to a scheduled game. A week shall be defined as Sunday to Sunday.
  - 5. No “split”, “double” or “2-a-day” practice sessions will be permitted. No practice is allowed on the day of a game or scrimmage. Practice hours will be limited to 2.5 hours per day prior to the first game and 2 hours beginning after the first game.
  - 6. Any player who has proof of participation in another contact sport from another organization or program may participate in the “FLYFCL, INC” program without going through the required conditioning.
  - 7. A youth athlete suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury during a practice or game must be removed from participation and may not return to play until evaluated by a licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussions and obtaining written clearance from the health care provider. All coaches must complete a course in concussion symptom awareness and prevention as part of their annual certification.
- D. EQUIPMENT

a. Each player participating in A, B & C levels are required to wear all the following equipment at each practice session, game, or other activity requiring physical contact:

- Helmet
- Face Guard
- Chinstrap
- Mouth guard (Any color but not clear. Exception to mouth guard restriction “if prescribed by a dentist as a special orthodontic mouth guard).
- Shoulder Pads
- Pants
- Jersey
- Hip Pads
- Thigh Pads
- Knee Pads
- Athletic Supporter and Cup (Males Only)
- Shoes with molded cleats or sneakers
- Rib Guards
- Sticky gloves are not allowed
- Flag players are required to wear a mouth guard

b. All equipment must be of competitive quality and shall meet the requirements of N.O.C.S.A.E.

c. All helmets shall be re-certified by each team every two years.

d. All equipment per NFHS Football Rules Book.

e. The use of any kind of stickers, excluding the team logo or player number on helmets is prohibited.

f. The President of each team is responsible for enforcement of paragraph “A” above, and for selection of equipment, which is satisfactory quality for the service to which it is to be put.

## **GAME SCHEDULES**

### **Exhibition Games & Scrimmages**

Exhibition games and scrimmages for teams in all classes are permitted after conditioning and throughout the regular season if the game involves teams affiliated with “FLYFCL, INC.”. Any organization wishing to play an exhibition game against a non-affiliated organization must obtain prior approval from the “FLYFCL, INC.” Executive Board.

## Regular Game Schedules

All schedules will be arranged by the League.

- A. The following restrictions shall apply to the schedules:
- B. All schedules must conform to any local or other legal regulations in effect at the time and place of the game.
- C. No team shall schedule more than nine (9) games in any regular season.
- D. A minimum of four (4) days must elapse between the scheduled games of any team.
- E. A forfeited game shall be considered to have been played when counting the number of scheduled games. Any other reason than the forfeit shall be rescheduled.
- F. All scheduled games must be played: in the event of bad weather on a game day or during a game day reference the Section in this book, Game Day Procedure under Bad Weather Policy.
- G. The sequence of games played on: Sunday unless prior approval is granted by the Executive Board:

Flag – 8:45 am

C Team – Announcements begin as close to 9:45 am as possible, game to begin approximately at 10 am

B Team - Announcements begin as close to 11:45 am as possible, game to begin approximately at 12 pm

- H. Night games:

Flag will start at 2:45 pm

C Team - Announcements begin as close to 3:45 pm as possible, game to begin approximately at 4 pm

B Team - Announcements begin as close to 5:45 pm as possible, game to begin approximately at 6 pm

No game shall start after 7:00 pm

- I. Night Game requests must be requested through the FLYFCL Football Director no later than two (2) weeks prior to the first scheduled game of the season. Night game approval is not guaranteed and will be approved based on the availability of the officials.

If weather conditions prevent the use of a home team's game field for a regularly scheduled game, it shall be the responsibility of the home team to provide an alternate site, either at home or at the visiting team's field. If this cannot be done the game shall be forfeited to the visitors. \*NOTE! - The Head Official and Team President shall have final authority in any decision regarding the suitability of the playing field.

## Opponents Outside the FLYFCL

Unless specific permission is granted by "FLYFCL, INC." one week in advance of each event no team chartered by "FLYFCL, INC." may engage in any type of football activity, including, but not limited to, games either exhibition or pre- season, with a team (organized or unorganized) which is not chartered by "FLYFCL, INC."

## B & C Playing Rules

- A. All games will be played under the rules contained in the current edition of the NFHS Rule Book unless specifically modified within these rules.
- B. Defensive line players cannot line up directly over center. The defensive player must line up in the gap to the left or right of the center providing a clear/unobstructed line of sight from the official in the defensive backfield to the center.
- C. B Team will have a kickoff. The ball will be placed at the 45 (forty-five) yard line for the kickoff.
- D. Modifications to "C" team level only:
  - 1. Extra-point kicks, the ball will be lined up at the goal line to move the kick 3 yards closer to the goal post.
  - 2. A dead ball punt is allowed. The offensive and defensive lines will still engage each other, but the defense is not allowed to get into the back field. As the offense is not allowed to go into the backfield. As the offense is not allowed to run after the returner. If the punter drops the ball he/she can pick it up and still punt. The returner is allowed to field the ball without focusing on being tackled. It is a dead ball catch, the ball is spotted where the returner touches the ball first, or where it stops rolling if untouched.
  - 3. The ball will be put in play at the 40-yard line to start each new drive following a score and to begin each half.

## Scoring (all levels)

METHOD	POINTS
Touchdown	Six (6)
POINTS AFTER TOUCHDOWN	
Kicking	Two (2)
Running/Passing from 3-yard line	One (1)
Running/ Passing from 7-yard line	Two (2)
Field Goal	Three (3)
Safety	Two (2)

Forfeit - points credited to opponent one (1)

Offended team is behind at the time of forfeit: No score  
Offended team is ahead at the time of forfeit: Actual score.

## Home Team Responsibilities for Each Game

- A. Preparation of playing field and all accessories required for the game.
- B. Presence of a qualified physician, holder of a current Red Cross First Aid card, or an Ambulance.
- C. Furnish acceptable game balls.
- D. Payment of game officials and any other persons or fees required for proper legal conduct of the game.

## Playing Field

- A. The playing field shall be 100 yards by 53-1/3 yards. Any field not meeting official standards must be approved by "FLYFCL, INC." Officials. Characteristics of any deficient, but approved field must be pointed out to the officiating team and the representatives of the visiting team before commencing any game. Flag field set up as outlined in "Flag Rules".
- B. Goal posts will be recommended field equipment, but they will not be mandatory.
- C. Every organization is encouraged to have an alternate home field site for use in the event the primary site is not available due to weather conditions or other unforeseen events.
- D. Only the personnel listed below will be permitted in the areas as described. It shall be the duty of the home team to enforce this regulation:
  - 1. BENCH - Players, Adult team members, Physician, Red Cross first aid attendant, Ball boy/girl, Water boy/girl, and Team moms/dads.
  - 2. SIDELINES - Cheerleaders, Yardage, Chains, down marker, and 10 Play monitor personnel, and Team photographer.
  - 3. IMMEDIATE AREA ADJACENT TO FIELD - Ambulance and crew, and Law Enforcement Officers.

## Ball

- A. All "FLYFCL, INC." football games of any type must be played with either leather or composite leather football only, no other footballs will be permitted.
- B. A suitable game ball must be provided by the home team for each (A, B & C) games. The visiting team shall have the option to use a suitable game ball of their choice to be used by their offense, so long as the head official on site is notified prior to the start of the game.
- C. Any brand of football (Wilson, Baden, Rawlings, Spalding, Nike, etc.) may be used so long as said ball is suitable.

C & Flag team: "Pee Wee" size football

B team: "Junior" size football

\* Suitability- shall determine the appropriate size and condition of said ball with final authority being given to the head official on site should any question arise

- D. The Head Official shall have final authority in any decision regarding the suitability of a specific ball.

## Officials

- A. All officials for "FLYFCL, INC." games shall be registered collegiate, high school, or independent officials, whose qualifications shall have been approved in advance by the League.
- B. The "FLYFCL, INC" shall be responsible for providing four (4) qualified (officials/referees) at each game.  
In the case of an emergency, a game may start or continue with a minimum of three (officials/referees). At no time will a game start or be continued with less than three (officials/referees).
- C. Each official shall be furnished by the League with a current copy of the "FLYFCL, INC." Rulebook.

## Playing Time

All game timing is per NFHS Rules except no running clock will be permitted.

Quarter times for all classifications will be Ten (10) minutes.

## Mandatory Plays and Monitoring

It is mandatory that all players in all classes, who are physically able to play and are not being disciplined, must play at the minimum number of plays per the schedule below. The number of players shall be determined by the certified roster.

11-20 players	9 plays per half
21-30 players	7 plays per half
31 & up players	5 plays per half

Plays for each child will be counted and documented on the approved FLYFCL Play Count Form for each game. The Head Coach, play monitor and Club President (or representative) must sign the form at the end of each game verifying that each athlete received the minimum number of plays per half. The Play Count Form will then be submitted to [info@flyfcl.com](mailto:info@flyfcl.com) by 6pm on Sunday. Any Club who fails to submit their documentation or does not provide each child the required number of plays will be subject to disciplinary action.

## Team Playing Eligibility

- A. To certify a team roster (B or C) a minimum of 13 players must be registered and meet certification requirements.
- B. To play a game a minimum of 11 certified players from a squad (B or C) must be present to play a legal game.
- C. However, if a player is injured, a one-play grace will be allowed to play with 10 players, both teams. If the player cannot return and/or the game player or another player is

injured, the legal game will be stopped. The Head Coaches with Team Presidents can agree to play a controlled scrimmage to complete the game time available. Unless otherwise allowed by the League Directors the team that cannot finish the game will receive a loss and the opposing team a win.

## **Tie Games**

For all regularly scheduled games, there will be no additional competitive play to break ties upon completion of the regular game.

## **Scoring 40 Point Rule**

Once a forty (40) point differential is reached at any time during the game, the following procedures shall immediately be implemented:

- a) The team leading by forty (40) or more points shall not accumulate additional points for the remainder of the time that the forty (40) point differential exists.
- b) Only the trailing team may score and have points added to the official game score until time that the point differential is reduced below forty (40)
- c) If the trailing team reduces the point differential to fewer than forty (40) points, normal scoring procedures shall immediately resume for both teams.
- d) All other game rules, timing rules and normal football play shall remain in effect.

# **FLAG PLAYING RULES**

## **Philosophy**

The primary objective of our Flag program is to have fun. We want every child to have an enjoyable experience. To that end we will work very hard to make sure that the fundamentals are being taught, and that all participants have the opportunity to learn, have fun and a positive experience. It is an opportunity for each child to make new friends and to experience the pride of being part of a team. It is also an opportunity for players to begin to understand the game of football and allow our club to better prepare our players to play in our tackle program in the future.

## **Skills and Fundamentals**

Every kid will have the experience throughout the season to play every position regardless of physical size or ability. Each child will be coached on the basic fundamentals of football through a progression of each skill.

1. Proper stretching
2. Form running
3. Ball handling-handing off, receiving a handoff, pitching
4. Throwing
5. Catching
6. Stance

7. Centering ball- Short and shotgun
8. Pass Patterns
9. Blocking-run/pass
10. Rules of the game

## **Field Layout**

The football field will be divided up into 2 flag game fields. Both end zones will still be used. The 40-yard line will be the goal line for each field, making the end zone from the 40-50 yard lines. The first down markers will be at the 20-yard lines. The width of the field will be brought in with cones marked along the furthest hashes and the sideline, (see diagram). The final dimensions of the field will be 40 yds long and 30 yds wide.

## **Equipment**

Flag color must contrast with the uniform color. Flag belts must be of the ball and socket type with 2 flags (one on each hip). Mouth guards are required to be worn by all players. Soft caps can be worn at Club discretion.

## **Rules**

- A. Each team will supply 1 coach to act solely as referee per field in use in addition to the active coaches
- B. Each child will be a captain for a game and will take part in the coin toss which will determine who will have 1st possession.
- C. The game will consist of two 20-minute halves, running time. Teams will change sides after 20 minutes with possession going to the team that played defense the 1st possession of the game.
- D. Only 2 coaches per team will be allowed on the field at all times, and the other(s) will be on the sidelines making substitutions. It is mandatory that all players who are physically able to play and are not being disciplined, must play.
- E. Teams should snap the ball within 40 seconds of placement. Each team gets one (1) warning per game, after that the team will lose a down each additional delay.
- F. Teams will field 8 players on the field at one time. Offense will consist of a center, 2 guards, 2 ends, 2 running backs, and a quarterback. A minimum of 5 players must be on the line of scrimmage for the offensive team. The center and guards are ineligible pass receivers or running backs. Guards can have a maximum 1 yd split from the center.
- G. On defense, you may not have a player line up directly over center.
- H. Quarterbacks are allowed to run to the outside of the guards/ends but are not allowed to do a quarterback sneak. They must pitch, hand-off, or throw a pass. They can catch a pass or receive a handoff that comes back to them in order to run.
- I. Blocking is legal with hands between the belt and the shoulders. No holding or hooking a defender, no holding clothes, no blocking in the back, or using elbows to block.

- J. A special marker, or the referee, will designate a rush line seven yards from the line of scrimmage. Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.
- K. A legal rush is:
  - a. Any rush from a point 7 yards from the defensive line of scrimmage.
  - b. A rush from anywhere on the field after a four second count once the ball is snapped
  - c. A rush from anywhere on the field after the ball has been handed off or pitched by the quarterback
- L. The team with first possession will start with the ball at the 40-yard line facing the official end zone. They will have 4 plays to get the ball past the 20-yard line (midfield), which is always a first down. Once the ball passes the 20 yd. line, the team has 4 plays to score. If a team fails to get a 1st down or a score, the opposing team will take over possession of the ball at the 40-yard line facing the official end zone.
- M. The ball is always spotted where the ball carrier's feet are when the flag is pulled.
- N. One back is allowed to be in motion horizontally to the line of scrimmage before the ball has been snapped. If they advance forward, it will be a 5-yard penalty.
- O. There are no fumbles. Once the ball hits the ground the ball is dead. The team with last possession will get the ball at the spot of the fumble. No yards can ever be gained from a fumble. When a knee hits the ground, the ball is also ruled dead. Pitching or passing the ball forward once you are over the line of scrimmage is a penalty.
- P. Interceptions can be run back for an attempt to score. Once the play is dead, the ball is turned over to the team who intercepted.
- Q. When making a reception near the out of bounds, only one foot has to be in bounds in order for the catch to be good.
- R. Substituting will only be allowed after play has been ruled dead.
- S. There will be no time outs allowed.
- T. No score will be kept (team will get possession at the 20 yd line after safety)
- U. Penalties
  - a. Offsides/illegal motion on offense or defense should be corrected by the coach 0-yards
  - b. Offensive Holding or illegal block replay the down from the previous spot
  - c. Defensive Holding-automatic first down
  - d. Illegal flag pull (before possession of ball) replay the down.
  - e. Flag guarding replay and loss of down.
  - f. Offensive pass interference loss of down.
  - g. Defensive pass interference point of contact.
  - h. Illegal forward pass or pitch beyond the line of scrimmage replay down and down counts.
  - i. Delay of game – 1 warning, additional infractions lead to a loss of down
  - j. Illegal pass rush replay down 1st offense, subsequent offenses 5-yard penalty from the previous spot
  - k. Any arguing a call or showing any signs of poor sportsmanship will result in possible benching for the remainder of half.

- I. Any contact with the center with their head down will result in a 5-yard penalty

--- End of Flag Rules Section ---

## **MISCELLANEOUS RULES**

### **Game Day Ejection**

- A. The ejected player or coach must leave the grounds or premises, unless permitted by officials and Team President to remain and follow "sight and sound" rule. Sight and sound rule; off the field, out of sight and sound. The person may be allowed to watch the game without any participation or any further incident whatsoever.
- B. Any player or non-player assessed a flagrant foul or has been assessed 2 unsportsmanlike conduct fouls during a contest shall be ejected from the game per NFHS rules.
- C. A report of Code of Conduct will be completed and forwarded to the league. Disciplinary action shall follow guidelines as per FLYFCL By-Laws, Monroe County Officials Association, Section III and/or Finger Lakes Official Association.
- D. There is no appeal process for a game day ejection.

### **Proof of Player Eligibility**

- A. The eligibility of any player is subject to challenge before each game. Each participating team must have at each game adequate copies of the registration and any other papers required to prove eligibility of each participant.
- B. The ultimate responsibility of ensuring a player's eligibility shall rest upon each team's organization. Any team found to be carrying an ineligible player will forfeit any and all previous games played in the current season.

### **Protests**

- A. Legal protests - Protests concerning interpretation of rules of eligibility of a player prior to a game may be made in an orderly manner.
- B. Illegal Protests - The judgment of an official in calling a play may never be protested, but any and all complaints are to be directed through the president/Vice-President of the team. It shall be noted and taken to the next Division meeting and discussed at the "FLYFCL, INC." level.

### **Adult Conduct**

- A. The adult team members are expected to set examples for the players and cheerleaders in all things and particularly in sportsmanship and an adult approach to any differences, which may arise in connection with the game of football.

- B. The following rules are not expected to be all-inclusive but are listed as a basis for adult conduct. Each team official shall consider himself/herself personally responsible, not only for his/her own conduct, but for the conduct of all other adults representing his/her team.
- C. There shall be no profanity at any time in the presence of players, cheerleaders, or candidates. Violations may result in reprimands, probation, or dismissal of a team, organization, or an individual from "FLYFCL, INC."
- D. All criticism shall be constructive and given in private for the benefit of a player/cheerleader, and not for downgrading him/her.
- E. Adults are strictly prohibited from engaging or promoting any form of gambling related to youth football and cheerleading activities related to FLYFCL Clubs, individual teams or athletes. This does not apply to fundraising efforts such as 50/50 drawings, Super Bowl squares or the like.
- F. There will be no scouting or video recording at practice sessions or regularly scheduled games of a future opponent, unless requested and approved by both team Presidents, for the express purpose of education or assistance (i.e. clinics, additional trainings, choreography etc.). No coach (including Head, Assistant or Helper) shall be present at practice sessions or regularly scheduled games of future opponents. This shall not prevent the use of the same field for practice by two or more teams.
- G. No alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, vapes or other substances are allowed on the field, or in the spectator area, or at any team function where children are present.
- H. Use of telecommunications devices - There shall be no use of walkie-talkies, field phones, or any other type of signaling device to communicate information during the progress of any game.
- I. Elevated booths, towers, platforms, or similar structures, these structures will be used only for photographic purposes or announcing games. It is recommended, but not mandatory, that the home team would permit visitors to use their facilities for permissible activities.
- J. PA Systems shall be used for the purpose of player and cheerleader introductions and announcing games and half-time events.

## **CHEER POLICY & PROCEDURES**

All organizations in FLYFCL, Inc. must have a cheerleading program that provides instruction in basic cheerleading skills, and focuses on the goals of fun, safety, and participation. FLYFCL, Inc., rules shall follow the New York State Section V Cheerleading Safety Regulations and the National Federation of State High School Association Spirit Rules. A copy of these may be obtained from the League Cheerleading Director.

## **Player Roster and Eligibility**

- A. Cheerleader ages are based on their age as of December 1st of the current year. No player is eligible under 5 years old unless entering kindergarten and must turn 5 years old before December 1st.
- B. Rostering to a cheerleading team will be determined by the participant's school grade as of September of the current season:
  - A Team: Grades 7 and 8
  - B Team: Grades 5 and 6
  - C Team: Grades 3 and 4
  - Flag Team: Kindergarten, Grades 1 and 2

Special circumstances may be brought to the Club Board for consideration as necessary, but otherwise no athlete will be moved up or down from their grade appropriate level. Documentation must be kept by the Club as to the special circumstances, the meeting in which the information was reviewed and the final decision. Having an A team is optional and the choice is up to each club's board of directors. A team cheerleaders will cheer with B team cheerleaders for B team football games.

- C. No tryouts will be permitted.

## **Mascots**

Mascots must be at least five years old and certified on the team roster. Mascots may not be used in mounts or tumbling, or in competition. Mascots may participate in sidelines, "hello" cheers, or home game ½ time routines.

## **Directors**

- A. Each team shall have a Cheerleading Director or Coordinator who will be responsible to the president of that team. The director or coordinator of cheerleading activities must be at least twenty- one year of age, of unquestionable moral character, and shall serve without compensation. The cheerleading director may be appointed or removed by the President or his delegate at their discretion, with the advice and consent of the Team Board of Directors.
- B. The Director/Coordinator shall be responsible for:
  - a. Supervision of all squads, coaches, and helpers.
  - b. Providing the coaching staff with copies of "FLYFCL, INC" rules and the rules of the specific team.
  - c. Providing a curriculum of activities, including the schedule of games for the playing season.
  - d. The cheerleading director shall be responsible to attend the monthly league meeting. In the event he/she is unable to attend, a representative may attend in her place.

## Coaches

- A. The coaching staff is to be appointed or removed by the team president or his delegate at their discretion, with the advice and consent of the team board of directors. Each coach must be of strong moral character and is to serve without compensation.
- B. Coaches Certification – All cheerleading Head Coaches and assistant coaches, sixteen years of age or older, must be certified through National Youth Sports Coaches Association.
- C. Head Coach – Each level within a team shall have a Head Coach, at least 18 years of age, who will be responsible to the Director/Coordinator of cheerleading. The Head Coach shall have the responsibility of coaching her team, and of supervising the Assistant Coaches and Helpers for the squad. There shall be only one Head Coach for each level. If the Head Coach is between the ages of 18-21, an adult supervisor must be present at all times.
- D. Assistant Coach – Each level within a team shall have no more than four assistant coaches, who will be responsible to the Head Coach and work under the Head Coach's direction.
- E. Helpers – Each team may carry as many helpers as they deem necessary, so long as they are at least twelve years of age and are registered with FLYFCL, Inc.

## Practice Sessions

- A. Practice sessions are defined as any meetings of cheerleaders for either physical or classroom training in cheerleading fundamentals.
- B. Practice sessions shall begin no earlier than the first Monday – 4 weeks prior to the first regular season scheduled game and conclude no later than December 31 of the same year.
- C. There must be a minimum of ten (10) hours of practice completed before an athlete can participate in a stunt where the flyer is above the prep/shoulder level. This pertains to all positions: bases, spotters and flyers.
- D. When practice is held inside it is recommended to use mats whenever possible during the practice of any stunt.
- E. Participants must have an up-to-date physical exam on file with the team.
- F. Practice sessions will be limited to a maximum of ten hours per week prior to the start of the first game of the season. Practice sessions will be limited to six hours per week, after the first game. It is recommended that each team schedule at least four hours of practice in any week prior to a scheduled game.
- G. No split sessions, practices on game day, scrimmage or the day of a competition shall be allowed.
- H. Any player who has proof of participation in another contact sport from another organization or program may participate in the "FLYFCL, INC" program without going through the required conditioning.
- I. A youth athlete suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury during a practice or game must be removed from participation and may not return to play until evaluated by

a licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussions and obtaining written clearance from the health care provider. All coaches must complete a course in concussion symptom awareness and prevention as part of their annual certification.

## **Equipment**

- A. Each team will make financial provisions for supplying uniforms for its cheerleaders, consistent with the registered organization's team colors.

## **General Safety Guidelines**

There is no more important issue in cheerleading today than safety. With cheerleading becoming more athletic in nature and the risk of injury even greater, there is a stronger need for safety regulations. The following safety regulations are to be adhered to by all cheerleading squads that participate in the Finger Lakes Youth Football and Cheerleading League.

- A. A team medic must be present at each practice session or game. The medic is to have first aid and CPR training, or professional medical training. The team medic may be a coach or other qualified adult. Each squad will maintain a file of emergency medical information for all squad members and have an emergency plan in effect for the team.
- B. An organized team warm-up session is to precede every practice or game. Stretching and a warm-up routine are essential for safety, timing and proper execution.
- C. Proper attire is necessary to ensure safety
  - a. No baggy, loose fitting clothing is to be worn.
  - b. Proper footwear, specifically cheerleading sneakers or other suitable athletic footwear, is to be worn at all practices and games.

## **Cheerleading Stunts**

Cheerleading stunts are one of the many tools cheerleaders use to motivate the crowds at sporting events. As athletes, cheerleaders need to master the necessary basic skills to properly execute stunts safely and effectively. Safety of all cheerleaders involved is the number one priority. If stunts are learned in a progressive manner, with a qualified instructor present, and proper spotting is employed at all times, the chance of injury will be greatly minimized.

## **Terminology**

**Flyer:** The cheerleader at the top of a stunt.

**Base:** The cheerleader(s) on the bottom that support the flyer in the lift and balance of the stunt. The base is usually in charge of the timing and balance of the stunt.

**Spotters:** The cheerleader(s) who help with the building, balance, and dismount of a stunt. The main responsibility of the spotter is to catch or support the flyer or base should the stunt begin to fall.

## General Rules

All rules pertaining to stunts will abide by the current NFHS Rule Book unless specifically modified by the following rules:

- A. Cheerleading stunts require maximum concentration. Practice shall be conducted with no horseplay and as few distractions as possible.
- B. Establish strong basic techniques before progressing to more difficult skills
- C. Teams shall not perform techniques that the coaching staff is not familiar with or does not know how to teach.
- D. Stunts and pyramids are to be attempted only on the most ideal surface available. Cheer or gymnastics mats are preferable, but if none are available a dry, flat grassy surface is acceptable. Avoid attempting new stunts or pyramids on an unprotected gym floor. If this is the only surface available, extra spotters must be used. Stunts shall not be performed on slick, concrete-like surfaces.

## Flag Restrictions

- A. No single twist down dismounts
- B. No cartwheel and suspended forward roll dismounts
- C. No basket tosses

## C Team Restrictions

- A. No single twist down dismounts
- B. Basket tosses that include straight ride, toe touch, star, pike and pretty girl are allowed. Higher level tosses such as kick twists are not allowed.

## Spotter Requirements

- A. Front Spotters
  - a. Flag: Must have front spotter for prep/shoulder level or higher stunts
  - b. B and C team: Must have front spotter for fully extended stunts
- B. Back Spotter
  - a. Flag and C team: Must have an active back spotter for thigh level or higher stunts
  - b. B Team: Must have an active back spotter for prep/shoulder level or higher stunts

## Tumbling

- A. All new tumbling activity shall be reviewed and approved by the coach prior to execution.
- B. Tumbling shall not be performed on wet, slick, or concrete-like surfaces. New tumbling skills are to be mastered on a mat, wherever possible. If a mat is not available, "over spotting" must be employed. New tumbling skills must not be learned on concrete or hardwood surfaces.
- C. In a practice situation, tumbling tricks shall not be performed without the use of a spotter unless they can be performed consistently without difficulty and are approved by the coach.

- D. For a complete list of tumbling skills please refer to the list found on NYSPHSAA's website  
[https://nysphsaa.org/documents/2021/9/20//tumbling\\_PROGRESSIONS\\_092021.pdf?id=1928](https://nysphsaa.org/documents/2021/9/20//tumbling_PROGRESSIONS_092021.pdf?id=1928)

## COMPETITIONS & TOURNAMENTS

- A. League Competition
- a. An annual league cheerleading competition will be hosted by the league and overseen by the executive board. Rules of conduct and format must be approved by FLYFCL, Inc.
  - b. It is the responsibility of the Cheer Director for FLYFCL to distribute to all club Cheer Directors' competition requirements for the season no later than August 1st of each season. These requirements include, but not limited to, mat size, squad specific requirements as to but not limited to number of team jumps, team stunts and such.
  - c. If a team's routine is interrupted due to technical difficulty beyond their control, they will be allowed to immediately restart the routine from the beginning. No team will be allowed to restart their routine at a later time in the competition.
  - d. Timing will begin with the first movement, voice or note of the music, whichever comes first. Teams may start in the load position or choreographed position before timing begins. The timing will end when the music ends or the team is done chanting.
  - e. Copies of score sheets will be provided by the FLYFCL Cheer Director at the beginning of the season.
  - f. A/B/C Cheer routines shall be a minimum of 1 ½ minutes and no more than 2 ½ minutes. Flag Cheer routines shall be a minimum of 1 minute and no more than 2 ½ minutes.
- B. Teams may elect to attend additional invitational competitions during the season. Attendance at a competition hosted by a non-FLYFCL Club/organization must be pre-approved by the Executive Board no later than September 1<sup>st</sup> to adhere with insurance requirements.
- C. Teams must attend the FLYFCL sponsored annual competition.
- D. If a club chooses option 1 for cheerleading roster, they will compete against other clubs using option 1. If a club chooses option 2 for cheerleading roster, the C and B team will compete against other clubs using option 2. Option 2 for flag team is the same as option 1 and will compete against any team.
- E. Head Coaches must connect with the safety judge prior to competition starting if there are any athletes wearing any form of cast or hard side brace, so the safety judge may inspect the covering to ensure compliance with the NYSPHSAA Rulebook.
- F. The Cheer Director from the host club of a FLYFCL sanctioned cheerleading competition must submit their results by 6pm on Sunday of the weekend the competition

is hosted to the FLYFCL Cheer Director via email. These results should include at minimum the top 3 team places for all divisions.

## **GAME DAY PROCEDURE**

- A. Host Team President (or Team Representative):
  - a. Welcomes the visiting team President (or Team representative)
  - b. Advises: house rules – location of announcer, concession, facilities, etc. The home team will provide an area on the sidelines for the visiting team to perform sideline cheers during the game.
  - c. Introduces Cheer Director
- B. Certified Roster
  - a. Certified rosters shall be available at games for review by Presidents or Team Representative.
- C. Player Name & Numbers/Cheerleader Names given to Announcer (20 minutes prior to each game)
  - a. Names & numbers - responsibility of President / Team Rep. of each team
  - b. Tape for cheers - responsibility of the Cheer Directors
- D. President & Head Coaches from both teams shall meet with the officials 30 minutes prior to each game
- E. 15 Minute Clock (prior to 1st game only) 10 Minute Clock (between 1st, 2nd and 3rd games)
- F. “Hello” Cheer
  - a. Pompoms at goal post prior to “hello” cheer
  - b. 15 minutes prior to beginning of game
  - c. Home team first
  - d. 50-yard line of football field
  - e. Go to end zone immediately following
- G. Introduction of Players (Announcer)
  - a. Visiting team first
  - b. Home team
  - c. READ CODE OF CONDUCT
- H. National Anthem shall be played at the beginning of the first game of the day. Anthem may be played prior to additional games with time permitting.
- I. Announcements
  - a. Captains to centerfield for coin toss
- J. Game Begins
- K. 12-minute clock for Half-time
- L. Half-time
  - a. Cheerleaders – visiting team – at 50-yard line
  - b. Announcer introduces visiting team cheerleaders
  - c. Cheer routine (no less than 1 ½ minutes or more than 2 ½ minutes maximum)
  - d. Visiting cheerleaders exit

- e. Cheerleaders – home team – at 50-yard line
- f. Announcer introduces home cheerleaders
- g. Cheer routine (no less than 1 ½ minutes or more than 2 ½ minutes maximum)
- h. Home cheerleaders exit

(NOTE: At the option of the Playing Teams Cheerleading Directors, it will be the Cheerleading Teams choice to exit to either visitor or home sidelines (i.e.: If one team wants to face the team to watch them cheer, they may do so at the instruction of their Cheer Director)

- M. Announcer (@ 4-minute warning)
  - a. Players to the end zone
  - b. Cheerleaders take position (Note: ONLY TIME Referees keep time is if they are currently keeping time on the field-4 min warning is up to team Appointee to keep) (Reminder: Cheerleaders –
  - c. If using pompoms, take your pompoms to the end zone prior to taking position)
- N. Game End
  - a. Handshake – Football Coaches and Players only
  - b. Next game cheerleaders do immediate “Hello” cheer

## Game Day

- A. Warm-ups for individual football and cheer teams shall not begin earlier than the start time of the game prior. A stand-alone game or first game of the day may not start warm-ups more than 1.5 hours prior to the game time. As is referenced in the section named “Practice Sessions,” no practice is allowed on the day of a game or scrimmage. “Warm-up” refers to a preparatory routine for athletes that includes cardiovascular activities, stretching, and sport specific movements aimed at physically and mentally preparing the body for performance, thereby reducing the risk of injuries. For example: For Sunday Games, Flag may not start warm-up prior to 7:15 am, C team may not start warm-ups prior to 8:45 am and B team may not start warm-ups prior to 10 am.
- B. B & C Cheer teams must attend every game that the football teams attend (home or away and in any weather condition unless the game has been cancelled in accordance with requirements herein) Exception to this attendance requirement would include any game which occurs within the same weekend as a cheer team attending competition.
- C. The cheerleading director, assistant director or Head Coach of the home team will be responsible for greeting the cheerleading director and coaches from the visiting team. The home team will provide an area on the sidelines for the visiting team to perform sideline cheers during the game.
- D. As outlined in the Game Day Procedure, the cheerleaders will perform “Hello” or “Thank you” cheers on the 50-yard line, prior to the start of the first game of each game and immediately following the introduction of all football players. Home team will go first with their “Hello” cheer and the visiting team will go after with their “Thank you” cheer. Cheerleaders will remain on the field for the singing of the National Anthem or proceed to the sidelines for the start of the game.
- E. Cheerleaders and staff will observe and obey the Code of Conduct during the game and at all times on the field.

- F. The home team will be responsible to provide a sound system to play music for half-time routines. Cheerleading coaches will provide the music to the sound system operators by the end of the first quarter or sooner.
- G. Cheerleaders from the visiting team will take the field promptly at half-time for introductions. Cheerleaders will then be allowed 2-1/2 minutes to perform a routine. The home team will follow. In the event of technical difficulties, cheerleading teams may be allowed a reasonable amount of additional time for their routine. Additional time shall be permitted at the discretion of the home team president, not coaches or officials.
- H. Music for routines may not contain profanity or sexual connotation.

## **Game Day Sportsmanship Policy**

(To Be Read Before the Start of Each Game)

The Finger Lakes Youth Football and Cheerleading League is committed to promoting the proper ideals of sportsmanship, ethical conduct and fair play at all League and Team activities. We will oppose instances and activities, which are not centered on the best values of athletic competition in order to ensure the wellbeing of all youth athletes. We will expect acceptable standards of good citizenship and proper regard for the rights of others.

We are further committed to the belief that teams participating in League activities should be held responsible for the conduct of their players, cheerleaders, coaches, staff and spectators. Conduct, which is detrimental to the educational value of athletic activities, may be deemed just cause for the League reprimand, probation, or suspension from League and Team activities.

- A. Keep cheering positive. There shall not be any profanity or degrading language / gestures.
- B. Avoid actions which offend visiting teams or individual players.
- C. Show appreciation of good play by both teams.
- D. Learn the rules of the game in order to be a better-informed spectator.
- E. Treat all visiting teams in a manner in which you would expect to be treated.
- F. Accept the judgment of coaches and officials.
- G. Encourage other spectators to participate in the spirit of good sportsmanship.
- H. Discourage the use, abuse and resulting negative influence of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.
- I. Observe the No Tobacco Policy at all FLYFCL events.
- J. Help maintain the field area by disposal of all trash in trash receptacles.

## **CERTIFICATION POLICY/ PROCEDURE**

All participants regardless of squad must be certified prior to participation in any FLYFCL contest.

## **Rosters**

A separate roster is required for each team of players and cheerleaders for A, B, C & flag. Each team of coaches for A, B, C & Flag and the full board of each club must also be included on separate rosters.

NOTE: All coaches Cheer and Football must be certified to coach. Acceptable proof of certification includes either the date of certification or number and must be noted on the roster.

## **Paperwork**

Required for the certifiers to review:

- a. Current physical, current picture, proof of grade & copy of the birth certificate

On the registration form highlight:

- a. Date of birth, date of birth on the birth certificate, date the physical was completed.

No blanks may be left on any form. If a section does not apply it should be noted as N/A.

## **Physical Form**

Every child is required to have a physical between 8/1 of the previous year and 8/1 of the current year in order to begin practice. Any player that has a physical after 8/1 of the current year and before certification is still eligible to certify but must meet the conditioning requirement before contact.

A physical will be considered valid if it meets the above date requirements, is performed by an MD, D.O., NP, or PA, and is documented on either the FLYFCL physical form, a medical provider's note allowing the child to participate in sports or a physical form provided by the physician, so long as they contain the signature and stamp of the MD, D.O., NP, or PA, performing the physical.

# **CODE OF CONDUCT**

## **Spectator Code of Conduct**

It is the responsibility of the spectator to:

- A. Keep cheering positive. There should be no profanity or degrading language / gestures.
- B. Avoid actions, which offend visiting teams or individual players.
- C. Show appreciation of good play by both teams.
- D. Learn the rules of the game in order to be a better- informed spectator.
- E. Treat all visiting teams in a manner in which you would expect to be treated.
- F. Accept the judgment of coaches and officials.
- G. Encourage other spectators to participate in the spirit of good sportsmanship.

- H. Discourage the use, abuse and resulting negative influence of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.

### **Youth Athlete Code of Conduct**

It is the responsibility of the player/ cheerleader to:

- A. Demonstrate self-control and respect for their coaches, officials, and spectators at all times.
- B. Remember that participation in sports should not be abused by unsportsmanlike conduct.
- C. Respect the other team and shake hands after the competition and congratulate them on their performance.
- D. Respect the integrity and judgment of the officials.
- E. Remember that their behavior while in uniform reflects on their team, their family, and their community.
- F. Understand and abide by the rules.
- G. Accept winning and losing with grace and dignity.
- H. Just say “NO” to drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.

### **Coach/ Staff Code of Conduct**

It is the responsibility of the coach/staff to:

- A. Promote good sportsmanship by setting a good example while coaching youth athletes.
- B. Respect the integrity and judgment of the sports officials.
- C. Approach competition as a healthy and constructive exercise. A win at all costs at any price philosophy is not welcome.
- D. Recognize that the participants are youth athletes, with many limitations and they will make mistakes.
- E. There should never be any crude, abusive, profane language with youth athletes, officials, or spectators.
- F. Instruct youth athletes in the elements of good sportsmanship and remove players / cheerleaders from competition who demonstrate unsportsmanlike behavior.
- G. Avoid behavior, which will incite youth athletes, opponents, or spectators.
- H. Discourage the use, misuse, and impact of drugs, including alcohol and tobacco, on youth athletes and spectators.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY**

If the weather involves rain, snow, sleet, hail, high winds, etc. – the game, scrimmage, or practice will be cancelled at the time the Referees and Team Presidents / VP (or Team Rep designated by the President) agree to cancel.

If there is any appearance of LIGHTNING, whatsoever, the game, scrimmage or practice is suspended immediately. A waiting period of 20 minutes minimum from the last time LIGHTNING was detected is required before the event continues. It is suggested that each team has weather watchers for Lightning – Lightning is not always immediately detected by the referees and/or the people involved in event activities.

### **Heat Index Temperature**

The Heat Index Temperature chart posted on the league website is to be used for all games, scrimmages & practices for limitations and requirements of activities due to heat related injury prevention. The official Temperature and Humidity readings shall be taken from [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com) for the zip code of the location of the event.

If the game has started and the game is called for bad weather, the score will be recorded as a tie if it is in the first or second quarters of the game and up to and including half-time. However, once the third quarter has started and the game is called, the game will be recorded for the scores, which stand at that time during the third or fourth quarter.

### **Thunder and Lightning**

The NYSPHAA policy should be followed for any instances of thunder and lightning that occur at a FLYFCL event. This policy is posted on the league website under the resources tab, weather related resources.