

Florida Christian Activities Association Flag Football Rules

The Florida Christian Activities Association has adopted the following rules and regulations to govern flag football. The National Federation of State High Schools Association also publishes rules, handbooks and casebooks that are used as a basis for these rules and are more precise. The FCAA will use the current National Federation rules and casebooks in conjunction with these rules for governing the play of flag football. However, if there is a conflict between the National Federation publications and the rules set forth in the FCAA flag football rules, the current FCAA rules will prevail.

SECTION 1 – THE GAME

1-1 Flag football is played with 2 seven men teams. The team in possession has a series of four downs to advance the ball to the line-to-gain, which usually is ten yards. Points are scored by touchdowns, successful try-for-points, field goals or safety.

1-2 The home team is responsible for the chain crew and down marker.

1-3 Only the head coach and/or the team captains may questions an official concerning an official decision.

SECTION 2 – THE FIELD

2-1 The game may be played on either a regular football field that is 50 yards wide and 100 yards long with 10 yard end zones at each end, or on a field that is 40 yards by 80 yards long with 10 yard end zones at each end. There are no exceptions. Failure to meet the field requirements will result in an automatic forfeiture by the home team. **STATE PLAY-OFFS MUST BE PLAYED ON A 40 BY 80 YARD FIELD.** Once a game begins on a field it becomes an official field regardless of size.

2-2 Goal posts are optional, but encouraged.

2-3 The home team is responsible for the marking and preparations of the field. The field must be marked off every 10 yards using only approved line marking material. Also, the home team should mark off spectator boundaries and team boxes. Goal posts are required. (Portable goal posts are acceptable. Portable goal posts made of 3 inch or 4 inch PVC pipe with a rope between them are acceptable. Rope is to be 10 feet off the ground to the top of the rope. Posts are to be 23 feet and 4 inches wide.)

SECTION 3 – EQUIPMENT

3-1 All game balls **MUST** meet the specifications set forth in the National Federation rules. Each team is responsible for furnishing one game ball. The offensive team has the choice of the approved ball. At the State Tournament, the FCAA will provide the ball.

3-2 The home team is responsible to furnish down markers and yardage chains. (Down marker and chains shall be kept on the “home” team side of the field.)

3-3 The home team is responsible to furnish a timing device. This will be the official time, and it will be kept by an official on the field. If there is a scoreboard, time and score will be kept on that. If there is a discrepancy, the time and score kept by the official on the field will take precedence.

SECTION 4 – PLAYER EQUIPMENT

4-1 Each player shall wear a jersey numbered on the back. The number on the back shall be at least six inches high and easily distinguished.

4-2 A Sonic flag belt must be worn by each player. The belt must have two attached flags, one on each side of the waist. Flag size is to be the same as when purchased. No cutting or reducing the size of the flags is allowed. The flags must contrast with the color of the pants/shorts. Flag belts are to be worn around the waist. (Sonic and Flag-a-tag are the same product with a different name.)

4-3 Players must wear shoes at all times. They may be regular football shoes, soccer shoes or other athletic shoes. No metal cleats or spikes are acceptable.

4-4 Sweat bands on wrists and head are acceptable, but not hats or helmets.

4-5 No hard protective equipment may be worn by a player. Knee pads in football pants are the only acceptable pods that may be worn. (Thigh pads and hip pads are not acceptable.)

4-6 Jerseys must be tucked in at all times. “Mid-drift” or fishnet jerseys are not acceptable.

SECTION 5 – THE TEAM

5-1 A team shall consist of 7 players on the field at one time. A team may start with 6 players, but no less, and may continue with 5 players. Any less number of players for these two situations will constitute a forfeit.

5-2 The offense must have at least 3 linemen who are within two yards of the line of scrimmage.

5-3 One or two players must be designated as the team captains by the coach.

5-4 The coach is the representative of the team, and is responsible for seeing that the team complies with these rules. Each coach is responsible for the conduct of his players. If a player is ejected from the game, he will then be suspended for the next scheduled conference game.

SECTION 6 – THE GAME

6-1 The game consists of two halves, 20 minutes each. The halves contain two 10 minute quarters. The officials shall notify the coach when there is two minutes remaining in the fourth quarter, but this is not a time out.

6-2 Start of the game: The game shall start with a kick-off from the kicking team's 30 yard line. Members of the receiving team shall line up no closer than the 40 yard line. (Note: There shall always be a 10 yard buffer zone between the kicking team and the receiving team.) The kick-off shall be alive until downed by the kick-off team or picked up by the receiving team. The winner of the toss shall have a choice which goal to defend or to kick-off or receive. The loser will have the choice at the beginning of the second half. After all scoring, except a safety, a new kick-off is made.

6-3 The clock shall stop for the following dead balls and resume when the ball is legally snapped:

- Team times
- Any score
- Incomplete pass
- Ball out of bounds
- Penalty-delay of game
- End of a period
- For extra points (clock is stopped for entire try)

6-4 The clock may be stopped for an official's time, and started again by the official's signal or the following reasons:

- Measurement for a first down
- Change of team possession
- Player equipment repair
- First down declared
- Notification of time remaining
- Any unusual delay in getting the ball in play or either similar reasons.

6-5 The offense will have 25 seconds to put the ball in play after it has been spotted. The official will blow his whistle when the ball has been spotted and the 25 seconds begins.

6-6 Offensive teams have 4 downs to make it to line-of gain, which is usually 10 yards.

6-7 Scoring: Touchdown is 6 points

Try for point is 1 point (kick) 2 points (running or pass)**
Field goal is 3 points
Safety is 2 points

**All T.F.P will be from the 5 yard line

6-8 Each team is allowed 3 time outs per half, limited to 1 minute per time out. After 45 seconds into the time out, the official will give a warning whistle that time is about to expire.

6-9 Free substitution is allowed as long as the ball is not in play.

6-10 A legal tackle is made by detaching the Sonic flag from the ball carrier's belt. If a flag is missing from the belt, the player is down at the point he catches the ball. If the flag comes out while the ball carrier is in possession of the ball, (it is not required for a defender to be in the area of the ball carrier) he is down at the point the flag falls out.

6-11 There shall be a 5 yard restraining line for the defensive team, unless the offense is within or on the defense's 10 yard line. In this case, the defense's restraining line shall be constituted by the neutral zone, which is the nose of the ball nearest the defense.

6-12 After the ball is ready for play, and before the snap, no false start shall be made by any offensive player. A false start includes a shift of a feigned charge which simulates action at the snap and any act clearly intended to cause an opponent to commit a foul. It is also a false start if any offensive player on the line of scrimmage between the center and the player on the end of the line, having placed his hand on or near the ground, moves his hand or makes any quick movement.

6-13 After the ball is ready for play and before the snap, each offensive player must momentarily be within 15 yards of the place where the ball has been spotted.

6-14 Off-sides denotes the position of ANY player, except the center right to be over the ball, who breaks the plane of the line of scrimmage, after the center has made his final adjustments to the ball.

6-15 Each member of the team is eligible to receive a pass and be a legal man in motion.

6-16 All punts or kicks MUST be announced. The defensive team may not rush. The ball must be kicked within 5 seconds after reaching the punter or the holder. The punt or kick is alive until it is downed by the kicking team, or touches a receiver and strikes the ground, or the runner is de-flagged. The "standstill pass" or run back is permitted on any punt or kick by catching the kick in the air, or fielding a ball from the ground that has not been downed by a member of the kicking team. The passer shall not take more than one step, after he gains possession of the ball, in the act of the "standstill pass."

6-17 A fumble or free ball shall be declared dead where it hits the ground, or at the point of the fumble. A forward fumble will go back to the spot of the fumble. A backward fumble is spotted where it hits the ground. On a kick-off or punt, the ball may be fielded and advanced by the receiving teams if not downed by the kick-off team prior to the fielding of the ball.

6-18 Forward passes are permitted as long as the passer has not passed the line of scrimmage.

6-19 Lateral passes are permitted. Any number of forward and/or lateral passes behind the line of scrimmage is legal.

6-20 There will be no center sneaks.

6-21 A dead ball occurs when:

- Flag belt is legally detached (also see 6-10; flag missing or falls out)
- Ball carrier touches the ground with any part of his body other than his feet or hands
- Ball touches the ground, except when kicking
- Ball leaves the playing field
- An official whistle blows

6-22 The defense may not detain the ball carrier by physical contact with the body or clothing of the ball carrier (a temporary “grab and release” of the lower part of the carrier’s jersey while attempted to de-flag the player will not be considered a hold.) The defense may not push the runner out of bounds. These fouls constitute a 10 yard penalty and an automatic first down. If the head official deems there was an intentional tackle (un-sportsmanlike conduct), and deems that a touch down was inevitable, the touch down shall be awarded. The penalty is assessed on the ensuing kick-off.

6-23 Any deliberate attempt by the ball carrier to stiff arm, shield his flag, make no effort to avoid the defensive player (charge), lower his head when running, or leave the ground (leap or dive) once he has possession of the ball, constitutes a 10 yard penalty. The passer may leave the ground only in the actual act of passing.

6-24 Blocking (mainly body contact) is prohibited and is a 10 yard penalty.

6-25 Offensive players may protect the ball carrier by screening (as done in basketball). A screen is defined as an offensive player taking up a still and upright position before a defensive player who is within one step of the screener. The screener must keep his hands within his elbows. No part of the screener’s body, except his feet, shall be on contact with the ground throughout the screen. Movement of the screener’s body in any direction which causes bodily contact will be considered blocking.

6-26 Defensive players must go around an offensive player or screener at all times. Pushing, pulling, or sliding across the screener is a charging violation and a 10 yard

penalty. Defensive players are responsible to avoid bodily contact with a passer at all times. Violation is a 10 yard penalty.

6-27 Pass Interference: During a down in which a legal forward pass is thrown, contact which interferes with ANY player's ability to catch a thrown ball beyond the line of scrimmage is pass interference. PENALTY: If the defense interferes with the offense, offense gets the ball at the point of infraction, if the ball was caught or not. If it was caught, then an additional 10 yards is marked off at the point of infraction. In both cases, it is an automatic first down for the offense. Pass interference on the offense is a loss of down and a 5 yard penalty from the line of scrimmage. If the defense has intercepted the pass, they are awarded 10 yards from the point of infraction, plus they retain the ball.

6-28 Spinning constitutes a 5 yard penalty from the point of infraction. Spinning is defined as an act in which the ball carrier makes more than one consecutive 360 degree turn. The ball carrier must move in an obvious forward direction without spinning after one of his 360 degree turns, and before beginning another spin. A ball carrier does not have to complete a spin of 360 degrees. This does not mean to restrict a ball carrier from twisting to avoid being downed.

6-29 When a penalty flag has been thrown, play will continue until there has been a whistle or the ball is downed. Offended teams will be notified as to their options.

6-30 Any profanity or un-sportsmanlike conduct will result in the offender being removed from the game and/or field. The player's coach must be informed of the infraction.

6-31 Any un-sportsmanlike conduct of a gross and willful nature or fighting will result in the elimination of the player from the game and will be reported to the conference head.

6-32 It is requested that all spectators stand at least 5 yards from the sideline and end-lines, and not in front of the bleacher areas.

6-33 Tie Breakers: If the score is tied at the end of regulation, a sudden-death over-time period will determine the winner of the game. At the end of such regulation play, the official will have the coin toss to determine the goals and possession as in a regular game. The over time period shall begin with a kick off. The first team to score ANY points will be the winner of the game. There shall be a 5 minute rest period between regulation period and over-time periods. Over-time periods shall be ten minutes long, with one minute time out per team. Teams shall change direction at the end of each overtime period as they did after the first and third periods. There shall be a one-minute rest between overtime periods.

SECTION 7 – FORFEITS

7-1 If a team fails to play at a scheduled time without proper notification to the other team, the game is forfeited in favor of the offended team. The score is 1-0 for the offended team, or if the offended team is ahead in the game, the score at the time of forfeit will stand. If the offending team is ahead at the time of forfeit, then it is 1-0 in favor of the offended team.

7-2 Proper notification is at least 48 hours preceding the game. If it is possible, earlier notification is requested.

7-3 Rescheduling of games is the responsibility of the teams and should be done as soon as possible.

7-4 A team forfeiting **MUST** give the reason for the forfeit in writing to the school and conference leader. Possible exception would be if the officials rule the game a forfeit, in which case the head official should officially notify the conference leader.

7-5 All games and scores must be received by the conference leader no later than 5 weekdays following the game. Conferences are to determine the method of notification. These rules supersede any others that may have been used by FCAA teams in effect before August 1, 1998.

SUMMARY OF PENALTY AND FOULS

1. Illegal use of hands, tackling, holding	10 yards (First down if against the defense) POI & LOD if against the offense)
2. Stiff arm, shielding flags, charging, Lower head, leaping	10 yards POI & LOD
3. Blocking or illegal screening	10 yards POI & LOD
4. Illegal contact with the Passer	10 yards (first down offense)
5. Un-sportsmanlike conduct	10 yards
6. Improper uniform or equipment	10 yards
7. Illegal participation (or substitution)	10 yards
8. Intentional grounding of the ball	5 yards POI & LOD
9. Illegal forward pass or handing of ball	5 yards POI & LOD
10. Illegal spinning	5 yards POI & LOD
11. Detaching flags early	5 yards (first down)
12. Excessive time-outs (time out is not granted)	5 yards
13. Less than 3 men within two yards of Offensive line.	5 yards
14. Off sides or encroachment	5 yards
15. Illegal procedure	5 yards
16. Illegal snap	5 yards
17. Delay of game	5 yards
18. Illegal man in motion	5 yards
19. Offensive pass interference	See rule 6-27 & LOD
20. Defensive pass interference	See rule 6-27 & First down