



CSA NFL FLAG RULEBOOK



GAMES

- At the start of each game, captains from both teams shall meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who shall start with the ball. The visiting team shall call the toss.
- The winner of the coin toss gets first offense possession. The loser of the coin toss chooses the end zone it would prefer to defend. Teams may not choose to defer to second half choice.
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has three (3) plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three (3) plays to score a touchdown.
- If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on its 5-yard line.
- If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its 5-yard line.
- All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yard line.
- Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the loser of the coin toss.
- Substitutions may only be made at mid-quarter, end of quarter, and halftime. Players on the field play both offense and defense; there are no changes or substitutions in players due to change of possession.

TERMINOLOGY

Boundary lines – the outer perimeter lines around the field. They include the sidelines, and the rear end zone lines.

Line Of Scrimmage – 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 7 yards (into the defensive side) from the Line of Scrimmage.

Offense – the squad with possession of the ball.

Defense – the squad opposing the offense to prevent them from advancing the ball.

Passer – the offensive player that throws the ball and may or may not be the QB.

Rusher(s) – the defensive player(s) assigned to rush the Quarterback to prevent him/her from passing by pulling his/her flags or blocking the pass. Rusher(s) must start their rush from the Rush Line.

Downs (1-2-3) – the offensive squad has three attempts or “Downs” to advance the ball. They must cross the Line to Gain to get another set of downs or to score.

Live Ball – the period of time that the play is in action. Generally used in regards to penalties, Live Ball Penalties are considered part of the play and must be enforced before the down is considered complete.

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

Whistle – the sound made by an official using a whistle that signifies the end of the play or a stop in the action for timeout, half time or the end of the game.

Inadvertent whistle – an official's whistle that is performed in error.

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

Flag Guarding – an 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 or arm.

Shovel Pass – a legal pass attempted behind the line of scrimmage by throwing the ball underhand or pushing it towards a receiver in a shotput type manner.

Lateral – a backwards or sideways toss of the ball by the ball carrier.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct – rude, confrontational or offensive behavior or language.

ELIGIBILITY

- A player's grade must fall within the current school year. Age can be verified by a valid birth certificate if necessary.
- All players must present a waiver that is signed by a legal guardian or parent.

EQUIPMENT

- The League provides each player with a jersey, black shorts, and flag belts. The league will provide balls for games. Teams must provide their own ball for practice use.
- Players must wear shoes. Cleats are allowed, however cleats with exposed metal are not allowed and must be removed.
- Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads, and kneepads. Braces with exposed metals are not allowed.
- Players must remove all watches, earrings and any other jewelry that the officials deem hazardous.
- Official NFL FLAG jerseys and black shorts (without stripes) must be worn during play.
- Players' jerseys must be tucked into the pants if they hang below the belt line.
- Pants or shorts with belt loops or pockets should not be worn.
- Mouth guards are mandatory for all players. No exceptions.

FIELD

- The field size is 30 yards by 70 yards with two 10-yard end zones and a midfield line-to-gain. No Running Zones precede each line-to-gain by 5 yards.
- 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 may not run the ball in any fashion. All plays, including those that begin with a handoff, must be pass plays.
- Stepping on the boundary line is considered out of bounds.
- Each offensive squad approaches only TWO No Run Zones in each drive (one zone 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down, one zone 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD).



COACHES

- Coaches are typically volunteer parents or family members helping the players learn and enjoy the game. Parents are encouraged to support the coach at all time.
- Coaches are allowed on the field to direct players according to need and Division.
 - K Division: Coaches allowed on field during entire game to direct offense and defense.
 - 1-2 Division: Coaches allowed on field during entire game to direct offense and defense
 - 3-4 Division: Coaches allowed on field during entire first three weeks of the season.
 - Starting with the fourth week of games, coaches must remain on the sidelines during play. Coaches must be on sidelines before snap of ball.
 - 5-6 Division: Coaches must remain on the sidelines during play. Coaches must be on sidelines before snap of ball.
 - 7-8 Division: Coaches must remain on the sidelines during play. Coaches must be on sidelines before snap of ball.
- Coaches are expected to adhere to NFL FLAG philosophies, coaching guidelines and codes of conduct.
- Only three coaches per team are allowed on the sidelines. Only two coaches maximum allowed on field during play for Division K, 1-2, and 3-4 (first 3 games only for 3-4 Division).
- Only Head Coaches (identified at beginning of game) may speak with game referees.

ROSTERS

- Home teams wear dark jerseys, visiting teams wear light jerseys.
- Games are played 5 on 5.
- Teams must field a minimum of four (4) players at all times. The league allows an opposing team to “loan” a player to a team lacking enough players to field a full team. This is not mandatory but at the discretion of the coaches involved.
- Each team is made up of between 8-10 players. Coaches are expected to provide for equal playing time and opportunity for all players to be active on offense including running, catching, or throwing the ball. Playing time will vary by team size and number of players available at game time.

TIMING AND OVERTIME

1. Games are played by four 10 minute quarters. Game clock is controlled by the referee and will be a continuous clock. The clock stops only for quarter and mid-quarter breaks, and timeouts.
2. Halftime is two minutes long. Time stop at quarter and mid-quarter is only long enough to allow substitutions.
3. Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.
4. Each team has one 60-second time out per half.
5. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
6. In the event of an injury the clock will stop and then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play.
7. During the regular season games, if the score is tied at the end of 40 minutes, the game should be determined a tie.

8. In playoff situations, an Overtime (OT) Period will be used to determine a winner. OT format is as follows:
 - A. Each team gets one series of three plays (and possibly more pending penalty enforcement) starting from the mid-field yard line.
 - B. First possession choice goes to the winner of regulation coin toss.
 - C. There is no Sudden Death; each team gets a minimum of one possession.
 - D. All regulation period rules and penalties are in effect.
 - E. There are no time-outs.
 - F. Each team will be scored based on points scored (or yardage gained, see below):
 - 1) If both teams score touchdowns and complete the same amount of points in conversions, the process is repeated in a subsequent OT period.
 - G. In the case of an interception, the ball will be marked at either the line of scrimmage, at mid-field or the point where the defender's flags were pulled, whichever is the more advantageous spot to the defense.
 - i. If Team B intercepts the ball and returns it for a touchdown, Team B wins.
 - H. Scoring – Same as regulation.
 - I. Change of Possession:
 - i. Change of possession takes place when Team A's forward progress is halted on downs, scores a touchdown, or is intercepted.
 - ii. Team B takes possession at mid-field and advances in the opposite direction. If no team scores in an OT period:
 - i. Yardage gained – each team will be given one complete series to drive the field to score during an OT; if neither team scores, then whoever gains the most yards in that OT period wins. The yardage gained will be noted by the official. The team with the most yards gained wins.
 1. Winning through yardage is equivalent to winning by 6 points for tie breaker purposes.
 - K. Multiple OT periods:
 - 1) First OT period – shown above:
 - a) Scoring teams can go for 1 or 2 point PAT.
 - 2) Second OT Period:
 - a) First possession goes to loser of regulation coin toss.
 - b) Scoring teams must go for 2 point PAT.
 - 3) Third OT Period:
 - a) switch possession, then same rules as second OT.

SCORING

- Touchdown: 6 points
- PAT (Point After Touchdown) 1 point (5-yard line) or 2 points (10-yard line). Note: 1 point PAT is pass only, 2 point PAT can be run or pass.
- Safety: 2 points
 - A Safety occurs when the ball carrier is declared down in his/her own end zone. They can be called down when their flags are pulled by a defensive player, their flag falls out, they step out of bounds or they hit the ground with their knee or arm. A Safety also occurs when there is an offensive penalty in the end zone.
 - Team that scores a safety gets the ball on offense beginning from their 5 yard line.
- A team that scores a touchdown must declare whether it wishes to attempt a 1-pt. conversion (from the 5-yard line) or a 2-pt. conversion (from the 10-yard line). Decision cannot be changed after a penalty. Interceptions on conversions cannot be returned.
- A touchdown is scored when the ball carrier's forward foot crosses the end zone line.

LIVE BALL / DEAD BALL

- The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.
- The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage. It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on defense or offense enters the neutral zone. In regards to the neutral zone, the official may give both teams a "courtesy" neutral zone notification to allow their players to move back beyond the line.
- A player who gains possession in the air is considered in bounds as long as one foot comes down in the field of play.
- 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.
- Substitutions may be made only during mid-quarter breaks, quarter breaks, and halftime. Exception is made for injured players or if referee requests a substitution for equal playing time.
- Any official can whistle the play dead.
- Play is ruled "dead" when:
 - The ball hits the ground.
 - The ball carrier's flag is pulled.
 - The ball carrier steps out of bounds.
 - A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored.
 - The ball carrier's knee or arm hits the ground.
 - The ball carrier's flag falls out.
 - The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one flag.
 - The 7 second pass clock expires.
 - An inadvertent whistle is performed (at the spot where the ball was whistled dead).
- In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has two options:
 - Take the ball where it was when the whistle blew and down is consumed, or
 - Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.

NOTE: There are NO FUMBLES. NO STRIPPING OF THE BALL. The ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground.

- A team is allowed to use a time out to question an official's rule interpretation. If the rule is interpreted incorrectly, the time out will not be charged and the proper ruling will be enforced.
 - Officials should all agree upon any controversial call in order to give each team the full benefit of each call. If the ruling is correct the team will be charged a time out.

FORMATIONS

- An offensive team 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.
 - One player at a time may go in motion 1-yard beyond and parallel to the line of scrimmage.
 - No motion is allowed towards the line of scrimmage.
- Offensive players must come to a complete stop for one second before the ball is snapped unless he/she is the one player in motion.
- 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.
- The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between his/her legs to a player in the backfield, and the ball must completely leave his/her hands.

RUNNING

- The ball is spotted where the runner's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball carrier has the ball. If one foot precedes the other, the forward foot marks the spot.
- The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball.
- Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Offense may use multiple handoffs.
- Laterals or pitches are allowed similar to NFL rules, including those beyond the line of scrimmage.
- "No-Run Zones," located 5 yards before each end zone and 5 yards on either side of midfield, are designed to avoid short-yardage, power-running situations. Teams are not allowed to run in these zones IF the subsequent line of scrimmage is LIVE. (Reminder: Each offensive squad approaches only TWO No Run Zones in each drive - one 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down, one 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD 5 yards). If offense loses yards following the crossing of the No Run zone and they are located back in this zone on subsequent plays, they may run or pass on subsequent plays of the same drive. However, if a team crosses the midfield line but is assessed a penalty on that same play that locates the line of scrimmage within the No Run Zone, then the No Run Zone is active on subsequent plays.
- The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage. Any other player may also make a forward pass from behind the line of scrimmage if a subsequent handoff or pitch has been made behind the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball has been handed off in front or behind the quarterback, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball forward. Diving, leaping or jumping in a manner that is obvious to be flag guarding will result in a penalty. This is at the discretion of the referee to determine if the action is blatant flag guarding; for example shuffling sideways is

typically not flag guarding, but leaping while in a forward motion would be considered flag guarding.

- Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a flag pull.
- 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.
- No blocking or “screening” is allowed at any time.
- Once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage an offensive player may not impede a player from pulling a flag, or blocking will be called. Running down the field will not be a penalty unless they get in the way of the person making the “tackle”. No running alongside, in front of, or with the ball carrier to aid in blocking defenders is allowed.
- 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.

PASSING

- All forward passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage.
- Shovel passes are allowed, but must be forward passes.
- No Run Zone passing: all passes from within the No Run Zone must be forward passes.
- The quarterback has a seven-second “pass clock.” If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, 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 no longer is in effect.
 - If the QB is standing in the end zone at the end of the 7-second clock and his/her flags have not been pulled, the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage (LOS).

RECEIVING

- All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line).
- 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 towards the line of scrimmage.
- A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.
- In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
- Interceptions change the possession of the ball at the point of interception. Interceptions are the only changes of possession that do not start on the 5-yard line.
- Interceptions are returnable. Returns of conversions after touchdowns, will be worth 2 points regardless of whether the team was going for 1 or 2.

NO RUN ZONE

- “No-Run Zones,” located 5 yards before each end zone and 5 yards on either side of midfield, are designed to avoid short-yardage, power-running situations. Teams are not allowed to run in these zones IF the subsequent line of scrimmage is LIVE. (Reminder: Each offensive squad approaches only TWO No Run Zones in each drive - one 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down, one 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD 5 yards). If offense loses yards following the crossing of the No Run zone and they are located back in this zone on subsequent plays, they

may run or pass on subsequent plays of the same drive. However, if a team crosses the midfield line but is assessed a penalty on that same play that locates the line of scrimmage within the No Run Zone, then the No Run Zone is active on subsequent plays.

- No Run Zone passing: all passes from within the No Run Zone must be forward passes.
- If a team is penalized or loses yards on a play within the No Run Zone that results in subsequent plays starting outside of the No Run Zone, a team may then run or pass on the subsequent plays.

RUSHING THE PASSER

- All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball is handed off, the seven-yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
- 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.
 - A legal rush is:
 - Any rush from a point 7 yards from the defensive line of scrimmage.
 - A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off by the quarterback.
 - If a rusher leaves the rush line early, they may return to the rush line, reset and then legally rush the quarterback.
 - If a rusher leaves the rush line early and the ball is handed off before they cross the line of scrimmage, they may legally rush the quarterback.
 - A penalty may be called if:
 - The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap and crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff or pass – Illegal Rush (5 yards LOS and first down).
 - Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped –
 - Offsides (5 yards LOS and first down).
 - Any defensive player, not lined up at the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed or handed – Illegal Rush (5 yards LOS and first down).
 - Special circumstances:
 - Teams are not required to rush the quarterback, seven second clock in effect.
 - Teams are not required to identify their rusher before the play, however if they do send a rusher, the rusher must start at least 7 yards from the line of scrimmage.
 - If rusher leaves the 7-yard line before the snap, he/she may immediately drop back to act as a defender with no offside penalty enforced.
 - Players rushing the Quarterback may attempt to block a pass. However, NO contact can be made with the quarterback in any way.
 - Offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has a CLEAR PATH to the QB and any interference that would impede his/her path to the QB will be considered screening. The defense may attempt to block a pass provided they do not strike the passer.

- Blocking the pass and then striking the passer will result in a 10-yard penalty.
- A Sack occurs if the QB's flags are pulled or drops the ball behind the line of scrimmage. The ball is placed where the QB's feet are when the flag is pulled or where the ball hits the ground.
- A Safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team's end zone. On a safety, the defense is awarded 2 points, and takes over possession of the ball at their own 5-yard line.

FLAG PULLING

- A legal flag pull takes place when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball.
- Defenders can dive to pull flags, but cannot tackle, hold or run through ball carrier when pulling flags.
- It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball or pull from the ball carrier's possession at any time.
- 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.
- A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball.
- Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping of head, hand, arm or shoulder, or intentionally covering flags with the football or jersey.
- Defenders may not pull on the jersey or any other articles other than the ball carriers flags.
- If the last defender pulls on clothing, jerseys or other clothing to slow down the ball carrier or tackles the ball carrier, this will result in an automatic touchdown for the offense.

UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

- 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! FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.
- Offensive or confrontational language is illegal. 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.
- Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent or official.
- Ball carriers MUST make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.
- Defenders are not allowed to run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
- Coaches must play all eligible players equal time, or as close to equal time as possible with number of eligible players during a game. Referee will give one warning before assessing a penalty.
- Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship:
 - Yell to cheer on your players, not to harass officials or other teams; Keep comments clean and profanity free; Compliment ALL players, not just one child or team; Keep younger kids and equipment such as coolers, chairs and tents at least 3 feet away

from the sidelines; Fans are allowed on sidelines, but leave adequate room for play and for coaches and teams.

PENALTIES

General

1. The referee will call all penalties.
2. Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
3. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted (spot fouls).
4. Only the Head Coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations.
5. Players cannot question judgment calls.
6. Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.
7. Penalties are assessed Live Ball then Dead Ball. Live Ball penalties must be assessed before
8. play is considered completed.
9. Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is
10. more than half the distance to the goal.

5 Yard Penalties

- Illegal Equipment
- Offside
- Running in “no-run” zone.
- Illegal motion (more than one person moving, false start, etc.)
- Illegal forward pass (throwing a pass beyond the line of scrimmage)
- Offensive pass interference (illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender)
- Screening, Blocking or Running with the ball carrier
- Delay of game
- Defense Illegal contact (holding, blocking, etc.)
- Defense Illegal flag pull (before receiver has ball)
- Defense Illegal rushing (starting rush from inside 7-yard marker)

10 Yard Penalties

- Roughing the passer
- Taunting
- Unsportsmanlike conduct.
 - After scoring and touchdown is good, offense receives a 10 yard penalty from the yard line of PAT attempt after touchdown (one warning to the player and team before ejection)

Spot Fouls

Flag guarding, jumping, diving on offense -10 yards & loss of down

Offensive Charging (ball carrier) -10 yards & loss of down

Defensive Pass Interference first down at spot of foul

Stripping the ball +10 yards & first down

Offensive Unnecessary Roughness -10 yards & loss of down

Screening, Blocking or Running next to or in front of the ball carrier -5 yards & loss of down

Defensive Unnecessary Roughness +10 yards & first down

Defense

Offside +5 yards from the LOS

Illegal contact (Holding player w/out ball, blocking, pushing) +5 yards & automatic first down

Illegal flag pull (Before receiver has ball) +5 yards & automatic first down

Illegal rushing (starting rush inside 7-yard marker) +5 yards & automatic first down

Roughing the passer +10 yards & first down

Taunting +10 yards & first down

Unnecessary Roughness (tackling, pushing) Spot foul, +10 yards & first down

Stripping the ball Spot foul, +10 yards & first down

Defensive Pass Interference Spot foul & first down

Offense

False start, Illegal motion (more than one person moving, or moving toward LOS), running in "no-run" zone. -5 yards from the LOS

Last 2 min of game, stop clock

Illegal forward pass (throwing a pass from beyond the line of scrimmage) -5 yards & loss of down

Offensive pass interference (Illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender) -5 yards & loss of down

Flag guarding, jumping, diving Spot foul,	-10 yards & loss of down
Screening, Blocking or Running next to or in front of the ball carrier Spot foul,	-5 yards & loss of down
Offensive Charging (ball carrier) Spot foul,	-10 yards & loss of down
Delay of game	-5 yards from the LOS
Offensive Unnecessary Roughness Spot foul,	-10 yards & loss of down
Offside (lining up offside)	-5 yards from the LOS