



C.S.A.L.

Flag Football

Rules

and

Regulations

Revised July 2026

Flag Football Rules & Regulations

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I. ELIGIBILITY

- A. Participation is open to elementary students up to seventh (7th) grade.
No one above 7th grade are eligible to participate in CSAL Athletics.
- B. Home Schooled and "Virtual" students are not eligible to participate in CSAL Athletics.
- C. Suspended Students
NO suspended student is allowed to play on the day he/she is suspended. It is highly recommended that a student be in school at least a half day to be eligible to participate in a game.
Exception: An extreme circumstance can be waived by the principal.
- D. Boys are not eligible to participate in a Girls' sanctioned sport including, but not limited to:
Girls' Volleyball, Girls' Basketball, Girls' Flag Football, Girls' Cabbageball
- E. Girls are not eligible to participate in a Boys' sanctioned sport including, but not limited to:
Boys' Basketball, Boys' Volleyball, Boys' Cabbageball
- F. Junior / Senior Teams
 - No player is allowed to participate on both the junior AND senior teams
 - Juniors are allowed to play on a senior team, but may not participate on both teams. Their name may not appear on both the junior and senior team rosters.
 - Schools are allowed to enter more than one junior and/or senior team.

Juniors – 4th, 5th, and 6th graders. Open to all students who have not not reached their 12th birthday before or on September 30, 2026.

1. 6th graders may participate on EITHER the junior OR senior team, BUT not both.
2. It is strongly advised that 4th graders NOT participate on a senior team unless:
 - a. The school does not have a junior team
 - b. The 4th graders are necessary in order for the school to Enter a senior team.

Seniors - 6th and 7th graders. Open to all students who have not reached their 14th birthday before or on September 30, 2026.
6th graders may participate on EITHER the junior OR senior team, BUT not both.

- G. **Developmental** – 4th graders ONLY. Schools are encouraged to incorporate a team comprised of only 4th graders (non-competitive)
 - By sport, schools will report to the Co-Commissioner their intention of having a fourth grade developmental team.
 - The Co-Commissioner will put these schools in touch with other to organize their own "league"
 - The fourth grade developmental league will not participate in CSAL competition.

II. INELIGIBLE PLAYER

An ineligible player is one not eligible to participation in competitions for reasons in violation of the CSAL Rules and Regulations.

- If the ineligible player is detected before participation,
No penalty. The error is corrected and the player is then eligible.
- If the ineligible player is detected once participated in regular season play,
 - The player is suspended from participation in any capacity for that league
 - The player may not be transferred to another team.
 - Any team using a player who is ineligible shall lose all contests in which the player participated.
- If he ineligible player is detected during playoffs,
 - The team shall lose the game in which the player is detected.
 - The game will be awarded to the team that originally lost the game and that team will automatically advance.

III. UNIFORMS

Before the coin toss, the game official will conduct a pregame uniform and equipment check to be sure all are in compliance with the CSAL Rules & Regulations. Coaches and Athletic Directors are reminded it is their responsibility to assure their players are in compliance.

- A. Each player must have a uniform shirt of the same color and numbers are required. All uniform numbers must be screened on or transfers from a sporting goods store. NO homemade taped on or numbers put on by a marks-a-lot will be allowed. Uniform shirts must be tucked into the shorts/pants. Long sleeves must be a different color than the team's flags.

Teams should carry "pinnies" (a colored vest) in the event both teams have the same color jersey. The home team is responsible to wear the pinnies.

On the roster, the player's jersey number, not their name, identifies that player.

- B. Shorts are to be of one solid color, no stripes and no design, with the exception of possibly a small school logo at the bottom of the shorts. Shorts may not have pockets.

If the illegal shorts are noticed during the game, the player will be taken off the field and cannot re-enter the game until the uniform complies. The team must take a time-out or substitute for the player to change his shorts.

- C. Skorts, skirts, or "Lululemon" type shorts are not allowed.
- D. All players must wear shoes at all times. Rubber soled shoes with rubber or plastic cleats may be utilized. No Metal cleats or metal-post shoes.
- E. No jewelry.

Failure to provide the necessary uniforms will result in the game being forfeited.

IV. EQUIPMENT

Each school is responsible for providing regulation equipment as designated by the CSAL flag football rules and regulation guidelines. The coach is responsible to carry with them a written roster which includes the players' name and uniform number, as well as a copy of the rules.

The game regulation time and score is kept on the field by the game officials.

- A. Official game balls will be any leather or rubber junior football of equal size to the Baden 500 junior, Rawlings Pro-5, Wilson TDJ, MacGregor MXJ, Nike Junior, and Wilson Ultra Junior. No Pee Wee size footballs are allowed. Footballs used in the "FNA" leagues are not allowed as these footballs are not regulation for CSAL. No colored footballs are allowed other than the standard brown colored football. The officials will allow the offensive team to choose its ball provided the ball is in good condition.
- B. Each team is responsible for providing their own official flag belt with flags.
 1. Triple Threat Belt with three (3) flags attached (the entire belt comes off when pulled and attach with a plastic clip (other brands are acceptable ONLY if they have the same clip as the triple threat flags; Academy flags are illegal)
 2. Each flag must be factory cut with a minimum of 2" wide and 14" in length
 3. Flags must be of different contrasting colors than shorts or pants
Note: Dark flags cannot be worn with dark shorts or light flags with light shorts.
 4. The team's flags must be a different color than the player's long sleeves.
 5. All players must have the same color flags.

Players will not be allowed to participate if their flags do not adhere to the above specifications. The game officials will determine if the flags are in compliance with the rule.

- C. No jewelry may be worn (bracelets, earrings, nose rings, or chains).

- D. Players are prohibited from wearing or using audio or video devices during the game

Equipment cont'd.....

- E. Coaches and school personnel are prohibited from filming games due to Archdiocese regulations
- F. Players may not wear regulation pads or head gear.
- G. Only bandages and soft casts may be worn (no metal exposed). Braces may be worn (no metal). No hard casts.

Failure to provide the necessary equipment will result in the game being forfeited.

V. SUPERVISION

A. Faculty Representative

It is strongly encouraged that a school/faculty representative (other than the head coach) be on site for all CSAL events. The representative is responsible for the conduct of the team players, coaches, and spectators. Noncompliant behavior must be reported to the school's Principal and Athletic Director. Complaints will be handled on a case-by-case basis between the school principal and the Co-Commissioners.

B. Coach

It is required that every CSAL team competing be accompanied by a coach who will be responsible for the team's conduct.

1. Coaches who are not of adult age (21 years of age), MUST have an adult with them on the team's sidelines. Absence of an adult supervisor will result in the team forfeiting.
2. Only one coach is allowed to enter into a discussion with the game official.
3. Coaches may not be on the field. Coaching from the sideline only. If a coach calls players to the sideline, they can huddle up 5 yards off the sideline, but ONLY the coach and the players on the field can be in the huddle.
4. Coach's Responsibilities
 - a. Carry with them a written team roster (a list of team players with jersey numbers)
 - b. Carry with them a copy of the rules.
 - c. Provide/assure regulation equipment as outlined the flag football rules.
 - d. Report final game results to their Regional League Representative within 24 hours of game completion. Failure to comply with this rule may result in a team forfeit.

VI. THE FIELD

A. The field shall be a rectangular area with

Length – Sixty (60) yards

Width – Thirty-five (35) yards maximum, Thirty (30) yards minimum

End Zone – Ten (10) yards maximum, Five (5) yards minimum at the end of each goal line

B. The field shall be marked with yard markers ten (10) yards apart.

C. No goal posts are used.

VII. TEAM SIDELINES

A. The location of each team's sideline shall be designated by the facility arrangement.

B. Teams should have opposite sidelines.

C. Only coaches and players are allowed on the team sidelines.

VIII. PLAYERS

A. A team shall consist of seven (7) players and must have seven (7) players to start the game. A team may play with less than seven (7) if no substitute is available to replace an injured or disqualified player.

B. Substitutes – there is no limitation on the number of times a player may return to the game.

Players cont'd....

C. Positions

1. All players must be visible at all times on the field.
2. No sleeper plays will be allowed.
3. No specific line position
 - a. Only one player (the center) is needed on the line of scrimmage.
 - b. Players may not interlock their feet; there must be a definite break (1ft) inbetween them
4. No player is allowed to have his back to the line of scrimmage.
5. No player on the offensive team shall be moving towards the line of scrimmage or backwards after they are set.
6. Unlimited players are allowed lateral motion but there will be no motion towards the line of scrimmage.
7. After break of the huddle, only one player may be in side-to-side motion at the time of the snap. If multiple players move before the snap, they all must come set again prior to the snap.
8. The receiving team may not hide a player on the sideline on a punt.
9. The receiving team may not position a player in front of the punter with hands up, making the punter kick over them or hit them in order to have the ball called dead at the spot with better field position.
10. All players are eligible to catch passes.
11. The center must snap the ball under the legs.
 - a. No center sneaks are allowed (there must be a definite break and clear daylight between the quarterback and the center's hands).
 - b. No direct snap (hand to hand between the legs) to the quarterback. The player receiving the ball from the center must be two yards from the center. Exception: A direct snap is allowed on a punt.

D. Offensive huddle – All players must come from a huddle. No extra players are allowed in the huddle

E. Defensive huddle – Teams are not required to have a defensive huddle.

IX. GRACE PERIOD

There is NO grace period for CSAL games, whether regular season or championship play. Teams, players and coaches, should arrive at the game site least 15 minutes prior to their scheduled game time. The host league coordinator will make a decision for those situations with extenuating circumstances.

X. THE GAME

A. Pre-Game

Prior to the coin toss, game officials will perform a pregame uniform and equipment check to be sure all are in compliance with CSAL Flag Football Rules & Regulations.

B. Coin Toss

The referee shall toss a coin before the game with the captain or coaches of opposing teams.

The winner of the coin toss has the choice of his team

1. starting on offense (choosing the ball) OR
2. choosing the goal his team will defend
3. There will be no deferring to the second half

The loser of the coin toss shall have the remaining option.

At the start of the second half, the teams shall

1. start play the opposite of what they did to start the first half,
2. and switch goals.

There shall be no kick-offs

C. After the coin toss, teams will gather mid field for a pregame prayer.

The Game cont'd....

D. Length of Game

Play will be four (4) quarters of eight (8) minutes each
 One (1) minute between quarters
 Three (3) minutes intermission between halves.

NOTE: Should a team be leading its opponent by twenty-four (24) points after three (3) quarters of play, the game is terminated.

1. During the game, the clock is stopped for:
 - a. Time-Outs
 - b. Scoring plays
 - c. Injuries
2. In the last minute of each half, the clock is stopped for
 - a. Out of bounds until the ball is snapped for the next play
 - b. Incomplete passes until the ball is snapped for the next play
 - c. Time outs until the ball is snapped for the next play
 - d. Bad or dropped snaps until the ball is snapped for the next play
 - e. First down until the ball is snapped for the next play.**
 - f. Penalties until the ball is snapped for the next play.**
3. No half or game will end on a defensive penalty.
4. The clock runs for all plays that stayed inbounds without achieving a first down.

E. In a series of four downs, a team must advance the ball a distance of ten (10) yards to be marked by the official.

F. Teams have twenty-five (25) seconds to put the ball in play from the time the official signals to play.
 Delay of game penalty = five (5) yards Excessive Delays = ten (10) yards.

G. Time Outs

Three (3) time-outs are allowed per game.
 One (1) additional time-out is granted for each over-time series.

XI. TIED GAME

- A.** If there is a tie at the end of the fourth quarter, each team is allowed one series of downs from the ten (10) yard line. If no score, and teams are still tied, then the game ends in a tie. Coin toss decides which team will have the series of downs first.
- B.** In Conference or City Play-offs where a winner must be determined, as many series as needed will be played.
 1. Each team will have another series of four downs (in reverse order of toss) until the tie is broken.
 2. Extra points will be played.
 3. Should a team elect to throw a forward pass in its series of downs, and said pass is intercepted, it shall forfeit all remaining downs.

XII. SCORING

- A.** When the ball crosses the plane of the goal line, it will be considered a touchdown and six (6) points are awarded. At any other place on the field the player's position (not the ball) determines the spot.

NOTE: The game officials will determine if there is a suspicion of a problem with the player's flag not being able to be pulled.

B. Extra points after a touchdown

One (1) point conversion from the three (3) yard line
 Two (2) point conversion from the ten (10) yard line

Scoring cont'd....

A player may advance an extra point pass intercepted in the end zone.

- The player returning the interception to the opposite end zone will earn 1 or 2 points for that team, points determined by how many points the original team was attempting to earn.
- If the player's flag is pulled in the end zone after that player crosses the goal line and enters the field of play, the call is a "safety".
- If the player chooses to kneel in the end zone upon the interception, the extra point attempt is no good and play continues as usual.

C. Celebration after a scoring play:

Spiking the ball and/or taunting the other team warrants an unsportsmanlike penalty with the option for the defensive team to take the penalty on the extra point try or the resulting first down which would start first and 10 on the 25 yard line.

Penalty: 10 yards

D. Safety – When a player intercepts the ball in the end zone, he is able to advance it. If he comes out of the endzone, then retreats back into the end zone and then has his flag pulled, the defensive team is awarded a safety. The defensive team is awarded two (2) points and possession of the ball. The ball is placed on the 15 yard line, first and 10.

E. Onside Kick

In the last five (5) minutes of the game, after scoring, if a team is down, they can elect to go for an "onside kick". The onside kick would be at the opponent's 28-yard-line, 4th and 18, so they would need to get to the ten (10) yard line in one play. If they do, then they continue with the first down. If they fail, then the opposing team, which is the team that is winning, would take over on downs where the play ends.

XIII. THE FLAG BELTA. Flag belts should be worn snug, shirt in pants, with belt and flags. The shirt cannot cover the flag belt. Penalty = Ten (10) yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down.

Flag belts are not to be folded or wrapped in the clip. The excess belt must hang and Not be tucked into the player's shorts. Penalty for deliberately Securing Flag Belt = Ten (10) yards from the spot of the foul, loss of down, and possible disqualification.

B. Removing the Flag Belt

1. Players are allowed to leave their feet and/or dive to grab flag belts.
2. The ball is declared dead when a defensive player removes a flag belt or when a defensive player touches the offensive ball carrier whose belt fell off. Action against the runner, other than merely touching, is unnecessary roughness, and is subject to a ten (10) yard penalty.
3. When the flag belt is clearly taken from the ball carrier, the ball is declared dead and the down shall end.

A player who removes the flag belt from the ball carrier should immediately hold the flag belt above his head to assist the official in locating the spot where the capture occurred.

If for any reason it becomes impossible to pull the flag belt or if the flag belt does not come free from the ball carrier, a tag will down the play. (Judgement call by the official)

C. Illegal Removal of the Flag Belt

It is illegal for a defensive player to pull or remove the flag an offensive player as the ball is snapped or during a play with obvious intent of:

1. making the offensive player ineligible to become a pass receiver or the ball carrier
2. to cause the referee to call the play dead.

Penalty = Ten (10) yards and automatic first down. If a flagrant foul offender, removal from the game.

D. Flag "Guarding"

The ball carrier cannot hold or protect his flag belt by guarding or holding the flag belt.

Penalty = Ten (10) yards from the point of the infraction and loss of down.

XIV. GAME RULES

TRIPPING

Tripping is considered rough tactic. Penalty = Ten (10) yards for unnecessary roughness.

BLOCKING

- A. Blocking must be done without the use of hands or extended arms. The blocker must be in the upright position with arms straight down at his sides or behind his back. No part of the blocker's body, except his feet, shall be in contact with the ground.
- B. Rough tactics such as attempting to run over or batter down an opponent will be considered unnecessary roughness. Penalty = Ten (10) yards.
- C. Positively no interlocking interference. This includes grasping or encircling one another to any degree with the hands or arms. Penalty = Ten (10) yards from the point of the infraction and loss of down.
- D. No contact with the receiver on the line of scrimmage is allowed.
Downfield blocking will be called if an offensive player is in front of the runner past the line of scrimmage.

CHARGING

Defensive players charging rushers must move blockers to the side or go around. Attempting to run over or knock down an opponent is unnecessary roughness. Penalty = Ten (10) yards

PASSES

- A. All pass receivers must come from the huddle to be eligible for a pass (eliminates the sleeper play).
- B. All players are eligible to accept the pass provided they do not go out of bounds.
- C. A pass will be completed from the point of infraction if an interference violation against the defensive team occurs.
- D. Forward Pass
 - 1. A forward pass may be made during each play provided the passer is behind his line of scrimmage when he throws the ball.
 - a. Passing the ball past the line of scrimmage will result in a loss of down and a five (5) yard penalty from the line of scrimmage.
 - b. The defensive team has the option to take this penalty or not; the penalty is not automatic.
 - 2. A forward pass that ends behind the line of scrimmage is treated as a **lateral** and will become dead when it strikes the ground.
 - 3. A team may throw as many forward passes as it wants, provided they are:
 - a. thrown from behind the line of scrimmage and
 - b. no more than one pass crosses the line of scrimmage.
 - 4. A forward pass may be thrown on a punt provided:
 - a. the ball does not make contact with the ground AND
 - b. no more than two steps are taken
 - 5. On a blocked forward pass, the new play starts from the line of scrimmage.
 - 6. Defensive players may not make any contact with the quarterback's arm as he attempts to pass the ball. Roughing the passer will be called.
 - 7. Pass Interference will be at the point of the foul, or at the one (1) yard line if in end zone. It is an automatic first down.

PUNTING

- A. If a punt is to be made, the team kicking it must announce it before the down starts.
 - 1. After such announcement, the kick must actually be made, and within twenty-five (25) seconds.
 - 2. Neither team may cross the line of scrimmage until after the kick.
Penalty = Loss of five (5) yards and the ball remains dead.
 - 3. No defensive player is required to be on the line of scrimmage during a punt.
- B. Any punt that crosses the receiver's goal line is an automatic touchback (no point) and the ball is placed on the fifteen (15) yard line.

NOTE: The receiving team cannot run out any ball that has crossed the goal line.

Punting cont'd

- C. On all punts the receiver of the punt or free kick following a safety may pass the ball forward provided he
1. catches the kick on a fly (it does not touch the ground) AND
 2. does not take more than two (2) steps after the catch.

NOTE: Any punt that strikes the ground (bounces or rolls) may be advanced by the receiver

- D. Teams may not block a punt.
Defensive players may not position themselves in front of the punter with hands up, making the punter kick over them or hit them in order to have the ball called dead at the spot with better field position.
PENALTY: 5 yards from the line of scrimmage

DEAD BALL

- A. A fumble or pass that strikes the ground is dead.
- B. A delivery from the center which strikes the ground will be played from where the ball made contact made contact with the ground.
- C. A kick that strikes the ground after being muffed by a receiver is dead. The ball is awarded to the fumbler irrespective of who recovers it. This eliminates piling on.
- D. When a defensive player removes a flag belt
- E. When a defensive player touches the offensive ball carrier whose belt fell off.
- F. Any kick or punt that crosses the receiver's goal line is an automatic touchback (no points).
1. The receiving team cannot run or throw the ball out of the end zone.
 2. The ball is placed on the fifteen (15) yard line with first down and ten (10) yards to go.

XV. UNNECESSARY ROUGHNESS

- A. Offensive
1. Plays designed to run over the defense will not be allowed.
PENALTY: Ten (10) yards from the point of the infraction and loss of down.
 2. Any attempt by the ball carrier to run over a defensive player, or to straight arm the defensive player, is illegal.
PENALTY: Ten (10) yards from the point of the infraction and loss of down.

- B. Defensive
1. Defensive players may not:
 - a. Tackle, hold, block, or trip the ball carrier.
 - b. Remove any flag other than the ball carrier's to cause the official to blow the play dead.
 - c. Exhibit unnecessary roughness of any nature.

Violators of the above fouls may be banished from the game at the discretion of the official and/or draw a penalty of ten (10) yards.

NOTE: If the defensive player is between the ball carrier and the goal, and is guilty of any of the above violations, the ball carrier could be awarded the score if, in the judgement of the official, he would have attained it if he were not fouled.

XVI. ILLEGAL PLAYS

Teams using illegal plays will receive unsportsmanlike conduct penalties and may receive additional disciplinary action up to forfeiture and suspensions if the PAC. deems appropriate.

The following types of plays are considered by the PAC to make a farce out of and lessen the dignity of the game, and will not be allowed

1. Any non-football regulated type of plays
2. Cartwheels, tumble sets, or any other gymnastic type distractions

3. Encircling or running in groups with the football will be considered down field blocking and/or sleeper plays.
4. Sleeper plays
5. "Trick" plays

XVII. CONDUCT

- A. All players and coaches must exhibit Christian values and behavior.
- B. The referee has the right to remove a player and/or coach from the game for:
 1. Unsportsmanlike conduct
 2. Any flagrant foul
 3. Obscene or vulgar language
 4. Abusive gestures
 5. Derogatory remarks
 6. Unnecessary verbal abuse upon him for any real or imaginary wrong decision or judgment. This includes before and after the game.

All players and coaches who are removed from a game will:

1. Draw a minimum penalty of suspended from their next scheduled CSAL game (suspension will carry over to the next sport should he be removed on the last game of the schedule.
 2. Draw a maximum penalty of an indefinite suspension from all CSAL athletics.
 3. Could be called upon to appear before the Disciplinary Board and be subject to their ruling.
- C. Should the one who would be suspended actually participate, he/she would be ruled ineligible. Consequently the game in which they played during the period of suspension will be forfeited to their opponent. They will also be subject to additional suspension.

XVIII. OTHER RULES OF PLAY

For anything not covered above, The National Federation of State High School Athletic Association will rule in accordance with the Touch Football Rules.

XIX. APPENDIX

-- PENALTIES --

Unsportsmanlike Conduct = 10 yards and possible disqualification

Unnecessary roughness = 10 yards

Tripping or Tackling = 10 yards (unnecessary roughness), possible disqualification.

Running over Defense (charge, straight arm, etc) = 10 yards and loss of down.

Celebration after Touchdown = 10 yards (possession on 25-yard line on ensuing offensive series)

Delay of Game = 5 yards

Excessive Delays = 10 yards (and loss of down if no stop watch)

Excessive Time-Outs = 5 yards

Illegal Substitution (not reporting to huddle) = 5 yards

Entering neutral zone = 5 yards

Illegal Flag Removal = 10 yards, automatic first down. If flagrant, removal from game.

Protective Flag = 10 yards from spot of foul and loss of down.

Shirt Covers Flag (intentional) = 10 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down.

Wrapping, tying, securing, etc. Flags or Belt = 10 yards from spot of foul, loss of down; possible disqualification.

Illegal Blocking in Backfield = 10 yards from line of scrimmage.

Illegal Downfield Blocking (includes grasping, encircling, etc) = 10 yards from point of infraction.

Illegal Punt (unannounced) = 10 yards from spot of foul, loss of down.

Attempt to block punt = 5 yards

Excessive attempts (unsportsmanlike conduct) = 10 yards

Punter moving laterally along line of scrimmage = 5 yards

Pass Interference = At spot of foul, automatic first down
(Exception, if in end zone, ball placed on one (1) yard line, first and goal).

Offensive Pass Interference = 10 yards and loss of down.

Passing Behind Line of Scrimmage = No penalty, dead at spot it hits the ground.

Forward Pass Past Line of Scrimmage = 5 yards from point of infraction and loss of down.

