

## **FLAG FOOTBALL RULES**

**Rosters:** Team Rosters shall be limited to 18 players. Players - Men 18 years of age & over. Teams must turn in roster to Director of the league 24 hours before first game. After deadline has passed no new players may be added to any official roster. Failure to comply with this rule will result in forfeiture of remaining schedule. Player contracts must be given to Director of the league before any player is eligible to play. Participants are required to complete a contract form each year. All participants in sports activities assume the risk of injury. The City of Winston-Salem, its employees and agents shall not be liable for injury to person, loss or damage to personal property arising from or in any way resulting from participation in the sports activities. Non-city residents must pay a \$20 non-city resident fee before he or she is eligible player.

**THE FIELD:** will be 80yds.x 40yds. In some instances, the field may be modified to playing conditions. Markings - The field will be marked / lined at 20 yard intervals. These will be referred to as ZONES or FIRST DOWN ZONES. These zones will determine first downs and ball advancement. Markers will be on 20 and 40 yard lines. The end zones will be 10 yards deep. The team benches will be for team personnel only. No children or spectators allowed in this area.

**EQUIPMENT:** Ball-Ball must be Colligate size and weight. Teams will provide game balls, the team listed first on schedule will supply game ball. Uniforms: Teams must wear matching colored shirts.

- A. Shirts/jerseys must be tucked in, and are not permitted to hang over the flag belt. This is to avoid any interference with pulling of the flag belt.
- C. Shorts, sweatpants or any athletic pants with pockets will be allowed. A player with pockets will not be allowed to wear a flag belt & will receive a Illegal Equipment penalty if he has pockets & a flag belt on at the same time. A player without a flag belt will be downed by tag (one hand touched by the defense between the shoulders and knees, including the hand and arm). This rule is to protect the defensive player.
- D. Shoes/Cleats - No shoes with metal or ceramic. \*If player is caught wearing metal spikes they will be ejected from game and violating team will receive an Illegal Equipment penalty. Shoes must be tied at all times. The clock will not stop for player to tie his/her shoe.
- E. Mouth piece is recommended.

**THE FLAG BELT:** Triple Threat Flags will be used.

- A. No article of clothing can cover any portion of the flag belts. Flag must be clear and un-obstructed.
- B. No towels attached or tucked at the player's waist are allowed.
- C. Should a player loose their flag belt legally or illegally during a down and should that player gain possession of a live ball, that player will be considered down when a legal tag (one hand touched by the defense between the shoulders and knees, including the hand and arm) is made.
- D. No tying belts in a knot. If a player is caught with flag belt in a knot they will be penalized with an Unsportsmanlike Conduct penalty which will be administered from previous spot & loss of down).
- E. When a player scores they must immediately raise their hands and allow an official to remove their flag belt. This is done to insure that the flag belt has not been illegally secured. If the belt has been illegally secured the score is disallowed, and an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty will be administered.
- F. Players must have possession of the ball before they can legally be deflagged. It is illegal for defensive player to intentionally pull a flag from an offensive player who is not in possession of the ball. In cases where a flag belt is removed illegally, play should continue with the option of an Illegal pull penalty of the play.

**LENGTH OF GAME:** Playing time shall be 54 minutes, separated into two halves of 27 minutes. Half-time shall be 3 minutes. There will be a running clock for the entire first half, and the first 25 minutes of the second half. The clock will stop on team timeouts, official timeout or injury timeout. The last 2 minutes of the second half the clock will stop. Incomplete passes, penalties, first downs and out of bounds plays. The clock stops for a first down, the clock begins again after referee spots the ball and blows the “ready for play” whistle. A coin toss will determine who shall receive the choice of possession or side at the beginning of the game. If only one team is ready to play at game time, they will automatically have the choice to give the other team a grace period. A grace period may be given to a team. During this grace period the game clock will be running. If a team does not have enough players at the end of 27 minutes, (first half), the game is a forfeit. A team does not have to give a grace period.

**A.** Each team gets 2 timeouts per half.

**B.** Timeouts last 30 seconds.

**C.** Referee timeout- Referee has ability to stop the clock whenever necessary.

**D.** If a coach disputes a ruling on an official’s call and wishes to confer with official, the official has the ability to stop the clock. If the call is reversed, no timeout is charged to the team. If call is not reversed and the play stands, the accusing team gets charged with a timeout. If a team has NO remaining timeouts, they cannot dispute the call and the clock remains running.

**PLAY CLOCK:** There will be a 40 second play on each down for the offense. A warning will be given to the offense 10 seconds is remaining on the clock.

**MERCY RULE:** If a team is 19 points or more ahead when the referee announces the two-minute warning for the second half, the game shall be over. If a team scores during the last two minutes of the second half and that score creates a point differential of 19 or more points, the game shall end at that point.

**OVERTIME (TIE GAME):** If the game score is tied after regulation time, then a coin toss will determine who will get the ball & side. The home team shall call the toss. There will be 2 overtime periods, if game remains tied after the 2 overtimes, the game will be declared a tie. Each team will have the chance to score in series of four downs from the 10 yard line.

**SCORING:**

Touchdowns = 6 points

Extra Points = 1 point if successful from the 5 yard line

Extra Points = 2 points if successful from the 10 yard line

Safety = 2 points

Defensive Conversion on Extra Point Attempt = 2 points

Once a team has made their choice on the extra point, they can only change their decision by taking a time-out.

**EXTRA POINTS:** There is no neutral zone on extra points, 1 point or 2 points.

**START OF GAME:**

**A.** There will be no kickoffs, only punting. This is rule is in place for the safety of the players. The ball will be placed o the RT 20 yard line unless moved by penalty to start the game and second half. This rule is also in following a safety, touchback, or extra point attempt.

**B.** Each team should start the game with 7 players; a minimum of 6 is needed to avoid a forfeit. A player may play on only one team. Teams must designate two (2) CAPTAINS, (offense & defense). The captains will be in charge of accepting or declining penalties. This is to avoid confusion between teams and officials.

**LINE OF SCRIMMAGE:** The offensive team must have a minimum of 4 players set the line of scrimmage at the snap. Players in motion do not count as players on the line of scrimmage. Once the center has placed his hands on the ball no offensive player may enter the neutral zone. Neutral Zone is 3 yards off the line of Scrimmage. Defensive players can line up on the line of scrimmage less than 5 yards from first down or less than 5 yards on goal line. Following the ready for play whistle and until a legal snap, no defensive player may encroach, touch the ball, stand in, or in any other way interfere with the offensive team. Encroachment Penalty occurs when the defensive player enters into the neutral zone.

- A. Foot To Foot** - When players lined up on LOS stand with legs spread shoulder width apart, with feet touching or nearly touching each other. Good for solid line to keep defense out. When the offensive players are foot to foot (at least 12 inches from one another) defensive players are not allowed to bull rush between the two players. This would impose a Bull Rush penalty on the defense.
- B. Wide Line** - When players lined on LOS, spread out, spanning the whole width of field. Good to open up defenses. When the offensive players form a wide line & the defensive player rushes between them the offensive player(s) are not allowed to close the gap and force contact with the defender. This would impose a Holding penalty on the offense.
- C. Any snap that hits the ground is a dead ball.** – (Loss of down)
- D. Center may adjust ball before snap.** (Grip/Turn)
- E. When ball is snapped** - only one offensive player may be in motion.
- F. Eligible receivers** – All players on offense.
- G. First down zones** are set 20 yards apart. If an offensive team moves the ball into a new first down zone, by pass, run or lateral the team is awarded a first down. Team has 4 consecutive downs to advance the ball to the next zone
- H. Advancing the Ball** - A team can advance the ball downfield with any legal forward pass, run, or lateral. Once the offensive team has passed the line of scrimmage a forward pass is illegal.

**HANDOFFS:** The only way a ball can be handed forward is to a player behind the line of scrimmage.

- A. Ball Carrier:** Can move parallel, forward and backward to LOS. Ball carrier can spin his body or run in any direction to avoid a flag pull. The ball carrier may dive to catch a ball, but not to advance it. (Example: first down.) A diving catch can not be advanced it will be down at the point of the catch. The ball carrier can not jump or dive over a defensive player. Exception: To avoid collision or injury- referees discretion.
- B. Flag guarding** is not allowed.
- C. No celebrations** in the end zones after a score. Team congratulations are allowed-referees discretion.
- D. If ball carrier falls** at any time during the run, he is considered down at that spot.

**SCREEN BLOCKING:** Legally obstructing an opponent without using any part of the body to initiate contact. Screen blocking shall take place without contact. The blocker shall have their hands and arms at their sides or behind their back. A screen blocker cannot use their hands, arms, elbows, legs or body to initiate contact. If they do use contact an Illegal Contact penalty will be enforced.

Screen blockers may not:

- A. Take a position** closer than a normal step when behind a stationary opponent.
- B. Make contact** when assuming a position at the side or in front of a stationary opponent.
- C. Take a position** so close to an opponent that they cannot avoid contact by stopping or changing direction.

**FORWARD PASSES AND INTERCEPTIONS:** If a player is in the air attempting to catch a ball, the player must contact the ground with at least one foot in-bounds with the ball in their possession prior to going out of bounds, unless contact by an opponent causes the player to first touch out-of-bounds. If possession of the ball is lost simultaneously when they hit the ground, it is not a catch. If a forward pass is caught simultaneously by members of opposing teams, the ball is dead at that spot and belongs to the offensive team.

**BACKWARD PASSES/LATERAL AND FUMBLES:** Any ball that is fumbled during a down will be dead by rule once it has touched the ground. A backward pass or fumble may be caught or intercepted by any player inbounds and advanced. A player may not intentionally throw a backward pass out of bounds to conserve time or to avoid being downed or an Illegal Pass penalty will occur. Once a ball has touched the ground the ball is considered dead.

A. If the ball breaks the plane on the end zone and is fumbled forward, it will be ruled a touchdown. As long as the ball breaks the plane it is a touchdown.

B. The flag must go past the first down zone to receive a first down. If a ball is forward fumbled on fourth down, before reaching the new first down zone, it will be turned over on downs to the opposing team.

**STIFF ARMING:** Stiff arming is not allowed & will result in an Illegal Contact penalty. An Unsportsmanlike Conduct penalty or ejection can occur if obsessive.

**STRIPPING THE BALL:** The defense is not allowed to strip, knock or steal the ball away from the runner. Personal Foul.

**GUARDING THE FLAG BELT:** Runners shall not flag guard by using any part of the body or ball to deny the opportunity for an opponent to pull or remove the flag belt. Flag guarding includes but is not limited to:

A. Swinging the hand or arm over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from deflagging.

B. Placing the ball in possession over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from deflagging.

C. Lowering the shoulders in such a manner that flag guards.

**OBSTRUCTING THE RUNNER:** A defensive player shall not hold, grasp, or obstruct the forward progress of the runner when attempting to remove the flag belt.

**PASS INTERFERENCE:** Any contact that, in the view of the official, interferes with the attempt to catch a pass (offensive or defensive player) is pass interference unless, in the view of the official, it occurs when two or more eligible receivers make a simultaneous and bona fide attempt to reach, catch, or bat a pass. If the pass interference by the defense or offense is intentional and/or unsportsmanlike, they may be penalized additional yards.

**PUNTING:** There will be no punt returns. The spot of the ball is where the RT receives or the punt hits. Quick punts are illegal. On fourth down the Referee must ask the Offensive team if they are going for a first down or punting. Once the offense has declared their choice, the Referee will inform the Defense of the Offense's choice. The only way the Offense can change their decision is to call a time-out, or if a foul occurs anytime prior to or during the down and the down is to be replayed. In the later case the Offensive team will be asked if they are going for a first down or punting. The kicking team must have four players on the line of scrimmage. No kicking team players may move until the ball is kicked. There are no restrictions to the number of players the defensive team must have on the line. Defensive players MAY attempt to block the punt by jumping straight up in the air. They may not penetrate the line of scrimmage. If a punt crosses the scrimmage line and touches a player from either team and then hits the ground, the ball is dead at that spot and belongs to the receiving team.

**SAFETY:** If a player carries the ball across the goal line they are defending and the ball becomes dead while in their team's possession, it is a safety. If a team commits a foul in the end zone where the spot of enforcement is designated as the spot of the foul, it will be declared a safety. A team recording a safety will receive two points. Ball will be placed on the 20 yard line. Exception - Momentum Rule - When a player intercepts a forward pass or catches a scrimmage kick between their five yard line and their goal line and their momentum carries them into the end zone where the ball becomes dead, the ball will belong to the receiving team at the spot of the catch or reception.

**OFFICIAL'S AUTHORITY:** An official assumes authority 15 minutes prior to the scheduled game time, and until they have left the field. The officials have the authority to rule on any situation not specifically covered in the rules. His/her decision is final, unless ruled otherwise by the supervisor on duty or the Director of the Sport. The official has the right to eject players or have them sit out of part or all of the game. Fans, coaches, and spectators are a part of a team and any fouls they commit will go against their team.

**PENALTIES:**

**5 YARDS-**

Delay of Game

Illegal Substitution

Illegal Motion- more than one in motion or moving forward when the ball is snapped.

False Start- 5 yards from the LOS & the defensive can not decline.

Encroachment

Offside

Less than 4 players on the LOS

Illegal Pitch (Forward Lateral)

**10 YARDS-**

Illegal Contact- (Illegal Blocks/ Moving Screen/ Defensive Holding) from spot & the down counts (loss of down).

Interference with ball before it is snapped- (defense mocking count) from LOS & redo down.

Diving or Hurdling to advance the ball- from spot & the down counts (loss of down).

Illegal Forward Pass- (pass after the flag belt crossing the LOS) from LOS & the down counts (loss of down).

Offensive Pass Interference- from LOS & redo down.

Roughing the QB (option to add unsportsmanlike conduct penalty)- from LOS & redo down.

Intentional grounding- from LOS & down counts (loss of down) clock will continue to run.

Assisting or pushing the ball carrier- from spot & the down counts (loss of down).

More than 7 men on the field- from LOS & redo down.

Illegal Pull- from spot & down counts (loss of down)

Flag Guarding- from spot & down counts (loss of down)

Offensive Holding- from LOS & redo down.

Bull Rush- (Defense contact on the LOS) from LOS & redo down.

## **15 YARDS-**

Defensive Pass Interference- 15 yards from the LOS & automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down.

Illegal Equipment- Flag belt tied or wearing a flag belt & having pockets.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

**PERSONAL FOULS-** (15 yard & automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down). Any act listed below or any other act of unnecessary roughness or unsportsmanlike conduct considered intentional by player, coach or bench is a personal foul. Players shall not:

- A. Fighting will not be tolerated (will result in ejection). Any player ejected for fighting or instigating a fight, will be suspended for 2 games. Director has all permission to deny eligibility. All ejections players will be suspended for the remainder of the game being played and 2 more games.
- B. Punch, strike, strip, steal, or attempt to steal the ball from a player in possession.
- C. Trip an opponent.
- D. Contact an opponent who is on the ground.
- E. Throw the runner to the ground.
- F. Contact an opponent either before or after the ball is declared dead.
- G. Make any contact with an opponent that is deemed unnecessary.
- H. Deliberately drive or run into a defensive player.
- I. Clip an opponent.
- J. Position themselves on the shoulders of a teammate or opponent to gain an advantage.
- K. Tackle the runner. (Warrants ejection)
- L. Taunting.

**Ejection:** Physical or mental abuse to a player, coach or referee. Disobeying league rules, Fighting, Excessive taunting, Uniform policy, Illegal equipment, Flagrant or Intentional foul, Arguing with officials, Alcohol or Drug use on City property. Any team or player disqualified or expelled from the league will forfeit remainder of games and not be eligible for play, for the duration of the year. League fees will not be refunded.

**FURTHER QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS MAY BE DIRECTED TO:** Todd Barr at 734-1216

**CO-REC FLAG Modifications:**

**PLAYERS:** A game is played between two teams of 8 players, 4 men and 4 women. Teams with 7 players shall be 4 men and 3 women or 3 men and 4 women. To avoid a forfeit, six players, 3 men and 3 women or 2 men and 4 women are required.

**THE BALL:** A regular, intermediate, youth or junior size football may be used.

**LINE OF SCRIMMAGE:** The offensive team must have at least 5 players on their scrimmage line. Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards from the previous spot.

**MALE RUNNER:** The offensive team males cannot advance the ball through their scrimmage line. Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards from the previous spot. There are no restrictions: during a run by a male runner once the ball is beyond the offensive scrimmage line; during a run by a female runner, and after a change of possession.

**OPEN vs. CLOSED PLAYS:** Each drive will begin with the play being open. During the offensive team's possession there may not be two (2) consecutive legal forward pass completions from a male passer to a male receiver. This rule applies to the Try. If a male passer completes a legal forward pass to a male receiver, the next legal forward pass completion **MUST** involve either a female passer or a female receiver for positive yards. (i.e. All plays are **OPEN** until a forward pass is completed from a male QB to a male receiver. After a male-to-male completion, the next play shall be **CLOSED**, and will remain closed until positive yards are gained on a passing play that involves either a female QB or a female receiver). All closed play violations shall be penalized as illegal forward passes. There are no other restrictions concerning a male passer completing legal forward passes to a female receiver, or female to female, or female to male. Any foul, whether accepted or declined, shall have no effect on whether the next legal forward pass completing is "open" or "closed." If a female ball carrier rushes the ball for positive yardage on a **CLOSED** play, there is no penalty, but the play shall remain closed.

**SCORING:** If a female player scores a touchdown, the point value is 9. If a female player throws a legal forward pass and a touchdown is scored by any offensive team member, the point value is 9.