

Flag Football Rules

Revised April 2026

Game-play follows U.S.S.S.A. rules, except for any alterations covered below

1. Coach/Captain Responsibilities:

- a. Ensure all players have registered for the team online prior to participating.
- b. Complete full team payment prior to Week 2* of the league schedule.
 - i. Teams not paid in full by this deadline may be removed from the league.
- c. Finalize team roster prior to Week 3* of the league schedule.
- d. Act as the spokesman for their team.

**Note: the deadline weeks listed in rule 1b, 1c, & 2b coincide with the week of the league and may differ from individual team's games played.*

2. Roster:

- a. **All players must register on their team online.**
- b. Roster adjustments may be made up to and including the 3rd week of the season. Rosters are finalized after the 3rd week* has been completed (see note above)
- c. Teams who use ineligible players will forfeit games where an ineligible player was used (see roster guidelines below)
- d. Players are only permitted to play for one team in any given league.

For Adult 4v4 Leagues:

- i. Roster can have a maximum of 8 players
- ii. Players must be at least 18 years old - ID's will be checked
- iii. **All players must have a valid "Players Membership" with TSE**
- iv. For roster verification, all players must check-in at the front desk prior to each game.

3. Cancellations and Rescheduling Requests:

The rescheduling of games will only be considered in extremely exceptional circumstances. To be fair to all teams, it is our intention to stick to the schedule throughout the season. Unavailability of certain players within teams will not be an acceptable reason to reschedule games.

4. Equipment:

- a. Player jerseys of opposing teams should be of contrasting color. The referee will assign pinnies to the visiting team if there is not sufficient contrast.
- b. Clothing must be tucked in, under pants, and under the flags.
- c. Flags must be a minimum of 1.5 inches wide and 12 inches long
- d. Players may not wear jewelry or other equipment that may be deemed inappropriate, dangerous or confusing by the referee. Hard casts are permitted with a minimum of 1" padding and permission from the referee.
- e. Teams provide their own ball for their offensive possessions. Any ball which size is approved for High School, College, or the National Football League is a legal ball (no intermediate or smaller sizes). All balls should be properly inflated.

5. Playing Time:

- a. League games consist of two 20-minute running-time halves with a five-minute halftime.
- b. Referees have been instructed to begin the games according to the posted schedules. Captains are responsible for watching the clock and having their team ready to start on time. Referees will announce a 30-second warning with a buzzer or whistle.
- c. The two-minute warning will stop the game in the second half only. With under two minutes to play in the second half, only a timeout or penalty (see rule 10-c) will stop the clock.
- d. Each team has one timeout per half. Timeouts are 30-seconds in length and stop the clock.
 - i. Timeouts that are not used in the first half; do not carry over to the second half.
 - ii. Timeout that are called after a touchdown is scored – i.e. defense (Team 1) calls a timeout after offense (Team 2) scores a touchdown. The Point After Touchdown (PAT) is a continuation of the touchdown play; thus, the clock will NOT start on the PAT snap. The clock will start when Team 1 snaps the ball on their first offensive play.
- e. There is no overtime in the event of a tie in regular season games. Overtime will be played in the event of a tie in playoff games.
- f. Teams must always field 4 players.
 - i. In the event a team can't field 4 players to start a game, a 10-minute grace period will be given from the scheduled game start time. The game will start in full once the 4th player arrives.
 - ii. In the event a team fails to field the required 4 players either after the 10-minute grace period expires or during a game, the referee will declare a 28-0 forfeit.

6. Game Basics

- a. Indoor fields are 28 yards x 62 yards with 10-yard end zones (outdoor field sizes may vary).
- b. Five-yard no-run zones are established from each end zone and on each side of mid-field
- c. Substitutions are allowed between plays. Substitutions must be made from the bench side of the field.
- d. Start of Play:
 - i. A coin toss determines the first possession. The team winning the coin toss can elect to start on offense or defend. The team starting on defense at the beginning of the game will start on offense at the start of the second half.
 - ii. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at their 5-yard line and has three (3) plays to cross mid-field. Once a team crosses mid-field, they have three (3) plays to score a touchdown. If the offense fails to get a first down or a touchdown, the defense takes over on their five-yard line. All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's five-yard line.
- e. A play cannot start until all offensive players have their flags on. If a flag falls off mid-play, the player is immediately called down once the ball is in their possession.
- f. The Quarterback is designated as the player who receives the snap from center. The Quarterback cannot run the ball.
- g. There is no time limit for the Quarterback to throw the ball. It is up to the defense whether or not they decide to rush (no 10-second rule)
- h. The center can snap the ball sideways or between the legs
- i. All players are eligible receivers
- j. One player may go in motion (parallel to the line of scrimmage) and the ball can be snapped to him/her.
- k. All forward passes must be completed beyond the line of scrimmage (no screen passes) or the play will be blown dead.
- l. No laterals or pitches of any kind are allowed. The ball must be handed off and only 1 hand off per play is allowed.
- m. Once the ball is handed off, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- n. One foot in bounds and possession of the ball constitutes a catch

- o. The offensive team is responsible for returning the ball and the line of scrimmage marker to the line of scrimmage after each play
- p. Each time the ball is spotted, the offense has 30 seconds to snap the ball
- q. Spinning is allowed.
- r. If a player's knee is down but his/her flags are still on, the player is considered down.
- s. Kicking or punting the ball is not allowed.
- t. All fumbles are considered dead balls and are placed where the ball hits the ground. The offense retains possession, unless the fumble is caught in the air by the defensive team before it hits the ground.
- u. Five-Mississippi Rush – Player rushing the Quarterback must be one-yard off the line and must count **out loud** or a penalty will be called.
- v. Interceptions are returnable (except on extra points, the play is ruled dead).

7. Scoring

- a. A player's flags must cross the goal line for a successful score/conversion. The position of the ball does not come into play.
- b. Touchdowns are worth 6 points with a 1- or 2-point conversion option.
- c. A 12-yard line mark shall be placed from each end zone for a 2-point extra-point attempt.
- d. A 5-yard line mark shall be placed from each end zone for 1-point extra-point attempt.
- e. Two-points are awarded for a safety, and the defensive team receives possession of the ball.
- f. Forfeited games will result in a recorded score of 28 points.
- g. Maximum point differential (for tie breaking procedures) is 28 points per game.

8. Contact

- a. Blocking is not permitted at any time. This is a non-contact game.
- b. "Bump and Run" defense is not allowed.
- c. Offensive ball carrier
 - i. The responsibility for avoiding contact rests with the ball carrier. They must show the officials an effort to avoid contact.
 - ii. The ball carrier may not deliberately run or dive into a defensive player.
 - iii. A ball carrier may spin or jump, but if they do so, they are considered in a state of non-control and should contact occur because of the uncontrolled momentum, he/she will be penalized.
- d. The defensive player on the line of scrimmage that is positioned in front of the offensive player snapping the ball, MUST be at least 1-yard from that offensive player.

9. Tackling and Flag Guarding

- a. A legal tackle occurs by a defender removing the ball carrier's flag without physically grasping the ball carrier.
- b. **Flag Guarding Rule** – Ball carriers may not guard their flag belt to deny the opportunity for an opponent to pull or remove the flag (whether intentionally or unintentionally). Flag guarding includes, but is not limited to:
 - i. Swinging hands or arms over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from de-flagging
 - ii. Lowering a shoulder and placing an arm over the flag belt
 - iii. Stiff arming an opponent
 - iv. Using the ball to protect the flags
- c. **The Breakaway Rule** – A touchdown or extra point will be awarded if in the official's judgment, a ball carrier who has obviously broken loose and has an apparent touchdown made, is tackled, held, or deliberately pushed out of bounds. The penalty will be unsportsmanlike conduct, and it would be enforced on the next down.

10. Penalties

- a. The following are 5-yard penalties:
 - i. Offsides
 - ii. Illegal Procedure
 - iii. Too many players on the field
 - iv. Delay of game
- b. The following are 10-yard penalties:
 - i. Flag Guarding
 - ii. Stiff Arming
 - iii. Diving
 - iv. Pass Interference (plus automatic 1st down)
 - v. Unsportsmanlike Conduct
 - vi. Blocking
 - vii. Contact created by ball carrier
- c. With two minutes or less remaining in either the half or game, a delay of game penalty will result in:
 - i. Loss of down, five yards, and the clock stopping for an offensive penalty (if the offensive team is ahead)
 - ii. Five yards for a defensive penalty
 - iii. The intent of this rule is to prevent a team from incurring an intentional penalty to stop the clock
- d. Excessive roughness, taunting and verbal abuse are considered flagrant penalties and may result in ejection from the game or league.
- e. Teams/Captains are responsible for their spectators' conduct.

11. Participant Misconduct and Discipline

Total Sports Experience has a zero-tolerance policy towards fighting, taunting, trash-talking and general unsportsmanlike behavior. The referee has the responsibility and the right to eject players, terminate games and use any other measures they deem necessary to maintain a safe environment.

Any player who is ejected will incur a minimum one-week/one-game suspension from all league-play at TSE. For Adult leagues, the individual may also be assessed a \$50 dollar fine. The individual may not participate in any game until the fine has been paid and the suspension is served. A second ejection may result in the individuals' suspension from playing for the remainder of the season.

Any player who uses a striking motion (punch, slap or swinging of the arm) will be banned from the facility for a minimum of four months.

Any player who is ejected for fighting or other violent actions may also be banned from the facility.

Any player who leaves the bench during an altercation, for any reason, may be ejected or suspended.

Any player who is ejected from the game may be asked to leave the facility, depending on the referee and Management's discretion.

The review of an incident and the resulting disciplinary actions are at the sole discretion of TSE Management.

12. Standings

- a. Point system for ranking teams
 - i. 3 points for a win
 - ii. 1 point for a tie
 - iii. 0 points for a loss
- b. Tie-breaker procedures (for playoff seeding)
 - i. Head-to-head record (between tied teams)
 - ii. Goal differential for the season (max of +/-28 points per game)
 - iii. Most points scored
 - iv. Least points conceded
- c. Tie-breaker procedures (for playoff games)
 - i. Each team will start at mid-field and have one series of downs to score
 - ii. If still tied after 1 series each: a second series will be given to teams
 - iii. If still tied after 2 series each: a third series will be given to teams but after a touchdown teams MUST go for a 2-point conversion. This format will be followed until the tie is broken.

13. Management Authority

Unsportsmanlike and inappropriate language or conduct directed at the referees, coaches, players, fans or employees of Total Sports Experience is not acceptable. Repeated violations will result in removal of a participant or a team for an entire season. Total Sports Experience is promoting an attitude and atmosphere of fair play, respect for others, and first-class behavior. We hold ourselves, as well as our guests, to those standards.

Rochester Regional Health Total Sports Experience reserves the right to add, modify, or change the rules of play at any time to ensure fair play and the safety of all teams and players.

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