



HIGH SCHOOL BOYS/CO-ED FLAG FOOTBALL RULES (updated Fall 2023)

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***IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EACH TEAM TO HAVE A COPY OF THESE RULES AT EACH GAME
TO REFERENCE IN THE CASE OF A DISPUTE***

1. LEAGUE POLICIES

1.1 Eligibility

- a) A student-athlete is eligible for participation if they are enrolled in and attend a CSAA member school and meet all CSAA age and grade requirements.
- b) Schools that share academic/athletic resources with other non-CSAA member schools may ONLY use student-athletes enrolled in the school registered with CSAA.**
- c) It is the responsibility of the member school to ensure all eligibility requirements are met. **Please refer to “CSAA Student Eligibility Guidelines” for further information.**
- d) For participation in varsity competition, a student shall only be eligible while enrolled in grades 9-12 up until their 20th birthday. Any student who will reach the age of 20 before or during the flag football season (before December 1 of the current year), cannot participate.
- e) Students in the 8th grade may participate in varsity competition if their school does not participate in junior high school competition.
- f) If a student in grade 8 participates in varsity competition for a school that participates in junior high school competition, that student is ineligible to participate in junior high school competition.
- g) If it is determined that a school used an ineligible player in a league game, **the game will be declared a forfeit and the win will be given to the opposing team.**
- h) It is the responsibility of each member school to ensure each student athlete has undergone a physical examination within the last calendar year before participating in athletics.

1.2 Uniforms

- a) All teams must be in matching uniforms shirts with unique numbers for each player.
- b) Jersey numbers **cannot be switched between players during the season.** In the event a jersey is lost or becomes unusable and must be replaced, a school must notify CSAA, and the replacement jersey must not have a number worn by a current player on the roster.
- c) If a team does not have matching uniforms before their first regular season game, they must inform the league beforehand.
- d) Jerseys that extend below the belt line must be tucked into their pants while on the playing field.
- e) Players must wear sneakers or molded rubber/plastic cleats. **Metal cleats are not allowed.**
- f) Players may tape their forearms, hands, and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads, and knee pads. Medical braces with exposed metals are not allowed.
- g) Players must wear sweatpants or shorts on the playing field.

1.3 Jewelry, Headwear, and Eyewear

- a) All earrings, facial piercings, body piercings, and wrist bands must be removed before the start of the game.
- b) Exceptions to the jewelry rule for religious regions will be made if the following conditions are met:
 - Student-athletes must have a letter on school stationery (signed by a parent and the principal) documenting the request for exemption.
 - Letters of exemption must be brought with the student-athlete to every game throughout the season.
 - If a student-athlete wears a religious wristband on wrist, it must be covered with athletic tape and/or athletic wristband.
- c) Players may only wear the following eyewear during games. (All eyewear should be secured to the player’s head via an eyeglass strap)
 - Plastic framed glasses
 - Sports goggles

- d) The following eyewear is not permitted:
- Eyewear with glass lenses
 - Metal framed glasses
 - Any other type of eyewear that the referee/umpire deems could be dangerous.
- e) The following eyewear is not permitted:
- Eyewear with glass lenses
 - Metal framed glasses
 - Any other type of eyewear that the referee/umpire deems could be dangerous.
- f) Baseball caps **may not be worn** on the field while playing.

1.4 Rosters

- a) Rosters are due by the team's 1st game of the season. **This will be strictly enforced.**
- If rosters are not submitted, team will be able to play but will receive a forfeit loss until roster is submitted.
- b) All team rosters will consist of a **maximum of 20 players** and must contain the following information:
- Name of school
 - Names and telephone numbers of head coach and assistant coaches
 - Legal first and last name of each player
 - Grade, age, month, day, and year of birth for each player
 - Uniform number of each player
 - Signature of principal
- c) It is the responsibility of each school member to ensure the accuracy of the information provided on the league roster. The information provided on the submitted roster is considered official and will be the evidential basis of any eligibility challenges.
- d) Changes to the roster cannot be made after it is submitted to the league office without the written consent of the Director of Athletics.
- e) Roster changes will be approved/ denied at the sole discretion of the Director of Athletics in accordance with the hardship provision.

1.5 Game Schedules

- a) All schools must be prepared to play on Mondays, Fridays, and Saturdays, plus the following holidays:
- Rosh Hashanah
 - Yom kippur
 - Columbus/Indigenous Peoples' Day
 - Veterans Day
- b) All schools must be prepared to play Saturday games throughout the course of the season and playoffs. **No team is allowed more than one (1) blackout Saturday per season.**
- c) All schools must be prepared to play Saturday games throughout the course of the season and playoffs.

1.6 Playoff Tournament and Tiebreakers

- a) CSAA will determine the playoff seeding once the regular season is completed using the following criteria:
- Head-to-Head results
 - Points Allowed
 - Points Scored

- b) A player must have played in at **least half of the regular season** games to be eligible for the playoffs. Exceptions will be made for injured players at the sole discretion of the Director of Athletics.
- c) Any team with an outstanding balance will be ineligible for the playoffs until fees are paid to CSAA.
 - The fees must be paid one (1) day prior to your first playoff game.
 - Fees must be paid electronically, or hand delivered to a CSAA member before the playoff game.

1.7 Video Recording

Video recordings are allowed by AD's, team managers, or coaches to record their own games.

- a) Players in uniform may **NOT** record their own games.
- b) Parents and spectators are allowed to film.
- c) Video recordings will only be reviewed in cases of injuries, altercations, or investigations of referee/umpire misconduct. Video recordings will not be reviewed to dispute judgment calls or other game play disputes.

1.8 Cancellation of Games

- a) Any cancellations due to weather will be made by CSAA by 12pm.
- b) Rescheduling of weather-related cancellations will be made by CSAA and agreed upon by both schools.

2. GAME DAY POLICIES

2.1 Game Duration

- a) Two 16-minute halves with running time.
- b) Teams switch sides of the field at halftime.
- c) All teams will have (2) thirty second time-outs per half.
- d) The quarterback will have a **5 mississippi (or rush)** count to release the ball, or the play is dead.
- e) The clock will stop on each whistle in the last minute of each half. The clock stops on a TD or extra point in the last minute of each half.
- f) OFFENSE will have 25 seconds to set hike the ball between plays (or delay of game penalty) will be called.
- g) Teams will have a 15- minute grace period before a forfeit is called.
- h) Half time is 5 minutes long.

2.2 Overtime Period

If a game is tied at the end of regulation, the following overtime rules will be followed:

- a) First Overtime
 - Each team will have one (1) down to score a touchdown from the ten (10) yard line.
 - If a touchdown is scored, teams will attempt the extra point try from the ten (10) yard line.
- b) Second Overtime
 - Each team will have one (1) down to score a touchdown from the ten (10) yard line.
 - If a touchdown is scored, teams must attempt a two (2) point conversion from the twenty (20) line.
- c) Third Overtime
 - Each team will have one (1) down to score a touchdown from the ten (10) yard line.
 - If a touchdown is scored, teams must attempt a two (2) point conversion from the twenty (20) line.
 - If the score is still tied after the third overtime, **the score is final.**

- Each team gets **one time-out** per overtime. Time-outs from previous periods will **not** roll over.
- 3rd overtime rules will be repeated in the playoffs and championship until a winner is determined.

2.3 Forfeits

- All forfeited games are entered into the standings as a **30-0 loss (equivalent to a loss by mercy rule)**.
- A fifteen (15) minute forfeit time is allowed for all games. This will be strictly enforced by the referees unless extra time is authorized by the Director of Athletics.
- Any team that forfeits three (3) times in a season will not be eligible for playoffs.

2.4 Suspension /Ejection of Student/Coaches

- Any player ejected from a game must leave the immediate playing area.
 - Players ejected from a game for unsportsmanlike behavior will face a minimum one-game suspension.
- Any coach ejected from a game must leave the immediate playing area.
 - If a coach is ejected from the game and there is no other coach to handle the coaching duties, the game will be called and awarded to the opposing team.
 - Coaches ejected from a game for unsportsmanlike behavior will face a minimum two-game suspension.

2.5 Equipment and Safety

All schools are required to provide their own flags and flag belts.

- Flag belts should include three flags, one (1) flag on the right side, one (1) flag on the left side and one (1) flag on the back.
- Wearing mouthguards is advised but not required in high school competition. Wearing mouthguards is **mandatory for JHS competition. There are no exceptions.**
- Each team must provide a **size 9 official football in HS competition.**
- Each team must provide a **size 7 official football in JHS competition.**

2.6 Protest Protocol

- Protests may only be made if a rule is alleged to have been applied incorrectly, or not applied.
 - No protest of judgment calls may be entered.
 - The coach must verbally inform the head official of the protest before play commences or resumes.
- Judgment calls include (but are not limited to)
 - Pass Interference
 - Offsides
 - Holding
 - False Starts
 - Out of Bounds
- All protest forms are on the CSAA website under the “Rules” tab.
- The Director of Athletics will investigate all protests and deliver a ruling within 48 hours of receipt of the protest. If a ruling cannot be made within 48 hours, the protesting coach will be notified of the delay and informed of when to expect a ruling.
 - If a protest involves misconduct of players, after a review of the incident (which can include statements from the coaches, referees, Game Supervisor and/or any video

footage), additional penalties can be assessed at the discretion of the Director of Athletics.

2.7 Sportsmanship

- a) All teams are expected to show sportsmanship before and after each game. Coaches and players must line up and shake hands after each game.
 - Exceptions to this rule are made for injured players after the coach informs the referee/umpire of the injury.
- b) Coaches are responsible for the actions of their players and spectators on and off the field.
- c) Only coaches, players, and managers are allowed in the bench area during the game.
 - Coaches and managers must be in team apparel/colors.
 - No spectators are allowed in the bench area during the game.
 - All teams are responsible for removing their trash from the bench area after the game.
- d) Officials have the right to determine what qualifies as offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the referee will give one warning to the offending person. If the offensive language continues, the offending person will be ejected from the game at the referee's discretion.
- e) Foul language, obscene gestures, abuse of the referees, and any other unsportsmanlike actions will not be tolerated from any coaches or players and may result in ejection or forfeiture of the current game, suspension from subsequent games and/or ejection from the league.

2.8 Fighting/Altercations

- a) Fighting of any kind will not be tolerated. Any player who throws a punch will be **ejected for fighting and automatically suspended for their next game.**
- b) If more than one (1) player fights during or after a game, it is considered a team fight.
- c) If a team fight takes place a team can be suspended for one (1) game or the entire season.
 - During a team fight if one (1) player is reported to be out of control, that player can serve a suspension longer than the team suspension.
- d) Coaches are responsible for controlling their benches during an altercation. If a player leaves the bench to participate in an on-court altercation, that player will be ejected from the game and suspended for the next game.
- e) After a review of the incident (which can include statements from the coaches, referees, Game Supervisor and/or any video footage), additional penalties can be assessed at the discretion of the Director of Athletics.
- f) CSAA reserves the right to suspend a player for a minimum of one (1) game and maximum of the entire season based on the severity of their misconduct.

2.9 Weather Adjustments

- a) The CSAA reserves the right to change the game duration if weather conditions or field time constraints become an issue. Games will be played in the rain unless notified by the Parks Department to cancel or stop the game.

2.10 Cancellation of Games

- a) Any cancellations will be made by CSAA by 12pm.
- b) Rescheduling of games will be made by the league director and agreed upon by both schools.

2.11 CPR Certification

- a) CSAA mandates AED/CPR Certification for all flag football coaches.

3. GAMEPLAY RULES

3.1 Possessions

- a) 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.
- b) The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense. The loser of the coin toss has the choice of direction. **Teams may not choose to defer to the second half.**
- c) The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four (4) downs to score a touchdown or get a first down to keep the drive going.
- d) If the offense team fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts its drive on its own 5-yard line.
- e) This is a (6) on (6) flag football league where **rushing the quarterback is not allowed.**

3.2 Field/No run Zone

- a) The field dimensions are approximately 60 yards long by 30 yards wide with two 10-yard end zones, and a midfield line-to-gain. No-Run Zones precede each line-to-gain by 5 yards. However, field size may vary based on field availability for each league.
- b) No-Run Zones are in place to prevent teams from conducting power running plays.
- c) In H.S. competition, the **No-Run-Zones are placed 5 yards** from each end zone, teams cannot run the ball in any fashion. **All plays must be passing plays**, even if it's a handoff.
- d) In HS competition, there is **NO FIRST DOWN line to gain**. Teams must traverse the entire field in 4 downs to score.
- e) In JHS competition, the **FIRST DOWN line to gain is at midfield**. Teams are awarded a new set of downs once this line is passed.

3.3 Play is ruled dead when:

- a) when the ball is dropped or fumbled by the quarterback to the ground.
- b) a ball carrier fumbles the ball to the ground.
- c) a ball carrier's knee touches the ground.
- d) the ball carrier's flag is pulled.
- e) a ball carrier steps out of bounds.
- f) a ball carrier dives into the end zone or for a first down.
- g) the receiver catches the ball while in possession of or no flags.
- h) the 5 count is reached with the QB still possessing the ball and the whistle is blown.
- i) inadvertent whistle.
- j) a flag falls off a receiver.

3.4 Scoring

- a) A team scoring a touchdown is awarded six (6) points.
- b) A team scoring from the 10-yard line after a touchdown is awarded (1) point.
- c) A team scoring from the 20-yard line after a touchdown is awarded (2) points.
- d) A team scoring a safety (capturing the ball carrier's flag in their own endzone) is awarded (2) Points.
- e) A team intercepting a 2-point conversion attempt and returning it for a touchdown is awarded two (2) points.
- f) A ball carrier **must have both feet and the ball** across the goal line to score a touchdown.
- g) **If a team is trailing by more than 30 points at any time of the game, the game will be called.**

3.5 Blocking

All blocking must be of the non-contact type variety.

- a) A block is attempted by placing your arms in front of your body in a down position, or in a cross position at your chest, while screening your body between the ball carrier and the defender.
- b) The offensive player must stop his block positioning by standing still (screening) when the defender is within two (2) feet of the offensive blocker.

3.6 Offense

- a) The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball. The QB does have the ability to scramble in the backfield but cannot advance the ball beyond the line of scrimmage.
- b) Shovel passes are allowed.
- c) The ball is hiked by touching the ball, and simultaneously saying "set-hike" after the in-play whistle blows from the head official.
- d) **Every offensive player must be completely stationary and behind the line of scrimmage before the quarterback says- "SET-HIKE".**
- e) Only one player can go in motion at a time.
- f) Players are responsible for placing their flags in the correct positions (two on side, one hanging from the rear). If the receiver is missing a flag, the play is dead at the spot of the exchange or reception.
- g) A runner may not leave their feet to advance the ball by diving or leaping.
- h) A player must have at least one (1) foot in bounds for a reception.
- i) A football spin moved is allowed, but players may not leave their feet.
- j) Absolutely no forward laterals.
- k) The ball is marked at the spot on the field where the flag is pulled on the field.
- l) **Direct handoffs and passes behind the line of scrimmage are permitted.**

3.7 Defense

- a) No "bump and run" or any contact is allowed with receivers.
- b) Defensive players are not allowed to run through offensive screeners.
- c) The "GIVER" (the defensive player lined up directly over the ball on the line) **must be identifiable at the start of the play.**
- d) The GIVER can drop back more than (5) yards or choose to move left or right as long as they're behind the line of scrimmage.

3.8 Flags

- a) Flags that are pulled must be held high in the air by the defensive player at the spot of the play.
- b) It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball carrier's possession at any-time.
- c) Defenders can dive to pull flags, but cannot tackle, hold, or run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
- d) If a ball carrier's flag inadvertently falls off during the play, the player is down immediately and the play ends.
- e) If a receiver's flag falls off prior to catching the ball, the play is dead immediately at the spot of the reception.
- f) Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the head, hand, arm, or shoulder, or intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey.

3.9 Coaches

- Coaches cannot step on to the playing field to call a play unless it's during a time out.
- Players can come over to the sideline and receive a play from the coach if it is within the 25 second play clock.
- Coaches are responsible for the conduct of their own fans, parents, and players. A 15-yard penalty can be assessed for conduct that is seen to be disruptive to the referees.

3.10 Penalties

The following actions will be called as rules infractions and assessed the associated penalties:

Pre-snap		
Infraction	Penalty	Down Status
Offsides	5 yards from LOS	Replay of down
Encroachment	5 yards from LOS	Replay of down
False Start	5 yards from LOS	Replay of down
Illegal Motion	5 yards from LOS	Replay of down
Delay of game	5 yards from LOS	Replay of down
Sideline Infraction	10 yards from LOS	Replay of down
Post-snap		
Infraction	Penalty	Down Status
Defensive Pass Interference	Spot penalty	Automatic 1st down
Offensive Pass Interference	10 yards from LOS	Loss of down
Screen blocking	10 yards from spot	Loss of down
Intentional Diving	5 yards from spot	Loss of down
Illegal flag pull	5 yards from spot	Replay of down
Illegal Run	10 yards from LOS	Replay of down
Defensive Holding	10 yards from LOS	Automatic 1st down
Flag Guarding	10 yards from spot	Loss of down
Unnecessary Roughness (offense)	15 yards from spot	Loss of down
Unnecessary Roughness (defense)	15 yards from spot	Automatic 1st down
Unsportsmanlike Conduct (offense)	5 or 15 yards from spot	Loss of down
Unsportsmanlike Conduct (defense)	5 or 15 yards from spot	Automatic 1st down

- Unsportsmanlike conduct penalties include excessive celebration, cursing or coaches running on to the field of play during the game. The referee will determine the severity of the penalty. Two (2) major unsportsmanlike conduct penalties will result in **ejection from game and possible suspension for next game** at the discretion of the Commissioner.
- Unnecessary roughness is a 15-yard penalty. A player receiving 2 unnecessary roughness penalties during a game will be **immediately ejected from the game and suspended for the next game**.