

CCYF Flex Flag Football Rule Book – ½ Field

This rule book outlines the playing rules for Flex Flag Football, a limited contact 8 on 8 football game that incorporates soft-shelled helmets and shoulder pads. The CCYF Board reserves the right to rule on any issue not specifically outlined in these rules.

Flex Flag ½ Field Setup

- The standard football field is divided in half with the direction of play going from the mid field out towards the end zone.
- 2 Flex Flag Football games can be run at the same time going in opposing directions towards the end zones on their respective field.
- The ball will start play at the 40 yard line – game start and turnovers.
- The direction of offensive play will go towards the existing end zones.
- If a ball is intercepted: the play is stopped and the ball is turned over to the intercepting team. Intercepting team will start at the 40 yard line.

Team Size and Groupings

- Each team has eight players on the field (8 on 8).
- A team can play with seven if it chooses, losing an eligible receiver on offense and non-linemen on defense.
- If a team is two players short, it will automatically forfeit the game. However, the opposing coach may lend players in order to allow the game to be played as a scrimmage. The officials will call the game as if it were a regular game.
- Grades: 2nd and 3rd

Required/Recommended Equipment

- The league will provide game day footballs at the start of the season.
- Matching team uniforms provided by the league must be worn.
- Each player on the field must wear league provided flags around the waist outside of game jersey with jersey tucked into shorts. Flags must be centered with a flag on each hip. Improperly worn flags are subject to a flag guarding penalty.
- Flags may not be altered in any way from their factory condition.
- Mouth guards, approved soft shell helmets and soft shell shoulder pads are mandatory and must readily visible to the game official. Athletic shoes/cleats must be worn at all times.
- Equipment may not be used in an offensive manner. (refer to unnecessary roughness section)

Banned Equipment

- Metal spikes; hard casts; unapproved soft shell shoulder pads or soft shell helmets; baseball caps of any kind; jewelry: including rings, necklaces and watches; and anything that conceals the flags.
- Scrum caps, karate helmets, headbands or any other non-approved helmet is not allowed.
- Players found to be wearing banned equipment are not allowed back onto the field until the banned equipment is removed.

Coaches

The following applies to all coaching staffs:

- All coaches must be approved through the league.
- Non-coaching parents are not allowed on the team area of the sidelines except as down marker holders.
- Each coach is expected to read and understand all stated rules in this booklet. Any questions should be directed to the league commissioner.
- All football personnel and coaches will abide by the Flex Flag Football Coaches Code of Conduct. Any violation of these rules can result in possible expulsion from your coaching privileges.
- If any coach deliberately and flagrantly violates these rules, the league may suspend the coach without prior notice.
- The head coach has final responsibility for his/her actions as well as those of his/her assistant coaches, players, staff and parents.
- When a head coach of record is not present at a game, a named assistant coach will act as head coach.
- The coach on the field is the only person allowed to speak to a game official. At the game official's discretion, an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty can be called on other coaches if they continually attempt to speak to a game official during the game.
- All coaches are to be respectful to each other, players, parents and game officials before, during and after games.
- The game officials are empowered to eject any coach or parent from a game if that coach or parent is acting unsportsmanlike, using foul language or is causing a disruption to the game. Swearing at a game official because you do not agree with a call is not acceptable and will not be permitted.

Coaches on the Field

- A maximum of one (1) coach per team can be on the field.
- Offensive coach stands 10 yards behind offense.
- Defensive coach must be to the side and outside of the numbers.
- Contact by a player with an official will not result in a stoppage of play.

Down marker

The following shall apply to down marker responsibilities:

- Down markers will be on the visitor's side of the field at all games.
- It is the responsibility of the visitor team to supply down marker volunteers, through volunteers can come from either side if necessary.
- The volunteers are considered part of the game officials' crew. As such, they can cheer politely and engage in normal sideline conversation but must not speak negatively about players, coaches or officials and must defer to the game official for all decisions made.

Game officials

- Game officials shall be assigned by the league; to include high school students, coaches and/or parents.

Game and play clock

- 30 minute halves. 10 minute halftime. There is a running clock that only stops for injuries/player safety and timeouts.
- Each team is entitled to 1 one-minute timeout per half. The clock restarts on the snap following any team time out.
- A 30-second play clock is enforced with the play clock beginning following the spot of the ball and at the head game official's signal.

Substitutions and injured players

- Free substitutions are in effect at all times between plays.
- Any player who did not participate in the previous possession must participate in the next possession.
- If an injured player remains down on the field, struggles to leave the field or needs assistance, the official will signal for the clock to stop. The play clock and game clock both restart upon the player leaving the field, the ball being set and both sides being ready to play.

Procedure for injured players

- If any game official stops play for an injured player or players to be checked/assisted, the injured player must leave the field for at least one play. A team may not "buy" a player back into the game through use of a time out.
- Head injuries. Any player who receives a head injury – whether a concussion, contusion, cut or other – during practice, pregame warm-ups or in-game is not allowed to return to play until cleared by a qualified medical professional.

Gameplay

- There are no kickoffs. Play starts at the offensive team's 40 yard line.
- There are eight players on each side of the ball, including a center and two guards on offense. The guards shall be no greater than two feet split between the center and the guard. Unbalanced lines are not allowed. One guard must be on either side of the center.
- Five players are required on the line of scrimmage with either tight ends or split ends joining the three linemen. Unbalanced lines are not allowed. Two players must be on the line on each side of the center.
- All players, except for the center, must be in a 2-point stance.
- The three players who line up at center or guard cannot receive handoffs nor be the initial touch on a pass. They may, however, catch tipped passes, at which point the play is blown dead.
- The quarterback may take a direct snap from under center or in the shotgun position.
- All fumbles – defined as a loose ball touching the ground – are blown dead with the team last in possession retaining possession at the spot.

Passing

- A forward pass that falls incomplete returns to the line of scrimmage.
- A lateral pass that is thrown behind or in front of the line of scrimmage and touches the ground is blown dead and returned to the spot where the ball touched the ground.
- A pass is determined to be forward or lateral based on the direction it travels, not by how it is delivered (i.e. overhand, underhand, side arm, etc.).

Receiving

- Only eligible receivers and a quarterback who has first handed the ball off or thrown a legal lateral pass can be the initial receiver on a forward pass.
- Players must get one foot down in bounds for a completed pass.
- If an offensive and defensive player catch a ball simultaneously and forward progress is stopped, the ball is declared dead at the spot and awarded to the offense. No flag pull or two-hand touch is required.
- If a receiver's flag falls off prior to making a catch, it is ruled a reception, and the ball is spotted where he/she made the catch. If a defender pulls a receiver's flag before the receiver has possession, an illegal flag pull penalty is assessed to the end of the play.

Blocking

- Lead blocking on all runs is allowed.
- Pulling offensive linemen is allowed, and all blocking rules apply.
- When engaging a block, the blocker must come to balance and all contact must be made with the hands.
- Landing on or piling on any player on the ground results in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.
- Blocking by initiating or leading with head, elbows, forearms, knees or shoulders – anything but the hands will result in a charging penalty. (2 charging penalties results in automatic ejection)
- Blocking below the waist, cut blocks, clipping and any blindside crack back blocks – by the offense or defense – are assessed appropriate penalties and result in an automatic ejection as determined by the game officials. A player who is blocked into a low block may continue to play in the game if the officials see extenuating circumstances.

Running

- The QB is allowed to run for a pass beyond the line of scrimmage after a pitch or hand off.
- If the QB who received the center exchange hands off/laterals to another player and (in the game official's opinion) attempts to double pass, the non-QB player now attempting to throw the ball will be viewed as the QB, thus he is limited to the QB running rules.

Pre-snap alignment

- The offensive team must have five (5) players on the line of scrimmage at the point of the snap – three linemen and one eligible receiver on each side of the field aligned on the ball.
- The guards shall be no greater than two feet split between the center and the guard. One guard must be on either side of the center.
- All motion and shift rules are as follows:
 - No defender can align directly over the center or in the A gap.
 - The two defensive linemen must be aligned within the body frame of the furthest offensive lineman/tight end. For example, a defensive lineman can line up from the outside shoulder of a tight end to head up over the guard. If a tight end shifts outside prior to the snap, the defensive player must also shift to at least the outside shoulder of the guard.
 - The defensive team may choose any alignment but must have two players on the line of scrimmage within the tackle box.

First downs

- The offense has up to four (4) plays to reach a 10-yard first down by run, pass or penalty.
- On a series beginning from or inside the defensive 10-yard line, the offense can only achieve a first down through penalty.
- Any penalty that results in a first down starts a new set of downs with a new line to gain.

Fourth downs

- A turnover will result the ball being at the 40 yard line.

Touchdowns and scores

- When a ball carried by an offensive player breaks the plane of the defensive team's end zone or an offensive player gains control of the ball in the defensive team's end zone, it is considered a touchdown.
- Extra point tries are attempted following all touchdowns with one (1) point from the 3-yard line and two (2) points from the 6-yard line.
- If a touchdown is scored as time runs out in the first or second half, the conversion will still take place.
- A score will be kept but no standings will be kept and no post season format.

Scoring values

- Touchdown = 6 points
- Safety: There will be no safeties
- PAT, game official will ask if the scoring team will go for 1 or 2 extra points.
- If the offensive team elects to go for 1, the ball will be placed on the 3-yard line.
- If the offensive team elects to go for 2, the ball will be placed on the 6-yard line.
- All rules apply during an extra point the same as they do during a regular play.
- In the event of a penalty on an extra point, the offense cannot change its decision to go for 1 point or 2.
- In the event of an interception or a fumble caught on the fly during a point-after try, the ball is blown dead. There is no return for 2 points.

Center

- The center must snap the ball between his/her legs. The snap must be continuous, meaning it must pass directly and immediately from the center to another player on offense.
- Center must have both feet behind the scrimmage line with no part of his/her body beyond the forward tip of the ball.
- The center can double-team block alongside another player but must initiate block with hands, and all blocking rules apply.

Jumping and spinning

- Players may not jump or hurdle to avoid a flag pull. This is flag guarding.
- Players may not dive for the end zone or to gain additional yardage. This is unnecessary roughness.
- Players may not attempt short yardage "over the pile" jumps. This is unnecessary roughness.
- Any player who jumps illegally and lands on another player will be flagged for unnecessary roughness.
- A player may dive in an attempt to catch a pass but is down upon reception.
- Quarterbacks can jump when throwing the ball.
- Players may spin, as long as the motion is continuous and at least one foot stays on the ground at all times.

Turnovers: Fumbles, dead balls and interceptions

- All fumbles are considered dead balls as soon as the ball hits the ground.
- If the ball hits the ground behind the player who fumbled it, the ball is placed at the point it first hits the ground.
- If the ball hits the ground in front of the player, the ball is placed at the point the player lost possession.
- An interception will result in the end of the play and the ball placed on the 40-yard line for the intercepting team.
- A player shall not strip anyone of the ball. Anyone making intentional contact with the ball while it is being carried causing the ball to be fumbled will be called for stripping, a 5-yard penalty.
- If applicable, the ball is dead if a ball-carrier's flag falls on its own.

Ball spotting

- Spotting the ball is at the game officials' judgment. It is up to the game officials to try and be near the spot whenever possible.
- Ball will be spotted where the ball is held when a player is downed.

A gap

- The A gap is the area between the center and the guards.
- Defenders on the line of scrimmage cannot line up directly over the center and may not immediately engage the center.
- Attempts at a center sneak by the offense is penalized as an A gap violation.

Penalties

- Any penalties not covered below are to follow NFHS rules.
- Due to the ½ field play – If a penalty would otherwise move the offense back beyond their 40-yard line, the penalty will be enforced as normal except the LINE TO GAIN will be extended to reflect the enforcement of the penalty
 - For example: a 5 yard penalty is enforced against the offense when the ball was originally placed at the 40-yard line to start the game. The new line to gain will be at the 25-yard line to achieve a 1st down with the ball still being played at the 40-yard line. The new down would be “1st/2nd/3rd/4th and 15 (or whatever yards are needed to reach the line to gain”
- Because of the shorter field – all enforcement of 15 yards will be enforced as 10 yards for the purpose of the game. (exceptions below)
- The team not committing the foul gets to choose between the result of the play or the enforcement of the penalty.
- If both teams commit fouls on the same play, they offset and the down is replayed.
 - An odd number of fouls with more being assessed on one team will still offset and result in replay of down.
- A live-ball foul on the offense is marked off from the spot of the penalty.
- A live-ball foul on the defense is marked off from the spot of the penalty, the original line of scrimmage or the end of the play, whichever benefits the offense the most.

- No penalty may move the ball more than half the distance toward the penalized team's goal line. When penalty yardage is greater than the distance to the goal, the maximum penalty is half the distance to the goal line.
- A half cannot end on a defensive penalty that is accepted. If the penalty is accepted, it is marked off and a single untimed down is played. If the penalty is declined, the half is over.
- A first down will be determined after the ball is spotted at the end of a play and any applicable penalty yardage is assessed. Net yardage (forward progress plus/minus penalty yardage) must be sufficient to be awarded a first down.

Note: All dangerous and flagrant fouls carry with them automatic first downs or loss of downs in addition to the penalty yardage.

Flagrant fouls

- A player committing a flagrant foul – including an unsportsmanlike conduct, intentional tackling or unnecessary roughness penalty with malice – will receive a warning from the head game official and ejected upon a second flagrant foul. If the first act is determined to be severe, the head game official has the option to eject the player without the warning.
- All flagrant fouls that do not result in an ejection will be accompanied by a substitution from the field for a least one play to allow the coaches to address the situation and calm down any tempers.
- It is recommended that the league track players who commit flagrant fouls on a per game basis. The head game official will mark down on paper the guilty player (by name, number and /or team) and will turn in the information to the league commissioner.
- The head game official's decision on flagrant fouls are final.
- The safety of all players is the primary concern of the league. Game officials shall call unnecessary roughness when any player uses excessive force or violence during a play – even if the play is technically within the rules.

Intentional tackling

Defense – The ball placed at the defense’s 5-yard and an automatic first-and-goal.

- Intentional tackling defined: Intentionally wrapping up to stop forward progress while taking the ball-carrier to the ground; shoulder checking/hit with the intent of knocking the ball-carrier to the ground. It is the game officials’ discretion on any other attempt to use excessive force by a player to initiate a tackle.
- An automatic touchdown will be given to the team if a player is running and judged to be free with no defenders between him/her and the end zone and is deliberately tackled, tripped or restrained by clothing grab by a pursuing player (with no attempt to grab the flag) or by an individual associated with the defensive team who comes onto the field.
- Not intentional tackling: Inadvertently grabbing clothing from behind in an attempt to pull the flag or unintentional contact resulting in a player falling to the ground.
- An infraction can be called when there is no effort made to pull the flag.
- If anyone (player, coach, parent, etc.) comes off the sideline to interfere with a breakaway, then a TD will be given to the team and the player, coach, parent, etc., will be ejected.
- Unintentional contact: 10-yard penalty. A less severe penalty will be enforced if a defender unintentionally impedes the ball carrier by grabbing a part of the ball carrier’s body or clothing while attempting to pull the ball carrier’s flag.

Unnecessary roughness

Offense: 10 yards, loss of down

Defense: 10 yard, automatic first down

- The safety of all players is the primary concern. Game officials shall call unnecessary roughness when any player uses excessive force or violence during a play, even if the play is technically within the rules.
- All players are expected to play “in control” at all times. Players are in violation of the unnecessary roughness rule when they risk injury to themselves or to other players because of unsafe or out-of-control conduct on the field.
- Examples include but not limited to: head butting, head slapping, throwing elbows or forearms and intentionally hitting, kicking, or tripping other players. It is the game officials’ discretion on whether these fouls elevate to flagrant fouls. Repeated or flagrant violations may result in the player being ejected from the game.
- A player may never lead with his/her head or initiate contact to the head.
- Unnecessary and overly violent contact that includes charging bull rushing, and purposefully shoving a player to the ground will be considered unnecessary roughness and automatic ejection.

Charging (offense) – unnecessary roughness

10 yards, loss of down

- When a ball-carrier intentionally runs into a defender, lowers his/her shoulder or makes unnecessary contact with defender in an attempt to cause bodily harm.
- When an offensive player intentionally runs through or over a defensive player with a running start.
- When an offensive player intentionally engages a block with his/her shoulder with no attempt to come to balance and initiate the block first with open hands.

Bull rushing (defense) – unnecessary roughness

10 yards, automatic first down

- When a defender intentionally uses his/her momentum or excessive force to bull rush through the centerline of an offensive player. Defender must make the appropriate effort to go around or to a leveraged side of the blocker.

Ejection

Any two (2) flagrant foul infractions by an individual player in one game or multiple single infractions across several games may result in further action, including suspension from future games or ejection from the league, subject to the league's discretion.

- The ejection process will also apply to coaches and any parents/spectators on the field or in the stands who encourage players to act in an unsportsmanlike manner.
- Any player who strikes another player or is involved in a fight will be immediately ejected from the game and be suspended indefinitely pending a ruling from the league's board.
- Before a player can be ejected from a game, all game officials must confer and unanimously agree. NOTE: Only the head coach or coach on the field may speak to the game officials. If a player or coach contests a call or says anything to a game official that the head game official feels is inappropriate, an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty will be called. The game officials are empowered to eject any coach if the foul is deemed excessive.
- If a coach is ejected, the individual cannot enter the field of play for the rest of the game and must leave the premises.
- Depending on the situation, the game officials have full discretion to go up the chain of command and may request for a CCYF Board Member to be involved.

GENERAL RULES:

Roughing the passer

Defense – 10 yards

Defenders may raise arms while rushing the passer so long as no contact is made with the passer. Excessive contact with passer before, during or after throwing the ball including but not limited to:

- Rushing the passer and running into the quarterback.
- Making contact with the passer's head and/or shoulders/throwing arm.

Unsportsmanlike conduct

Offense – 10 yards

Defense – 10 yards

All players, head and assistant coaches are expected to follow the codes of conduct. Unsportsmanlike conduct includes but is not limited to:

- Verbal abuse, profanity, taunting.
- Constant or repeated audible criticism of the game officials.

Game officials can eject any player, coach or spectator who violates this rule repeatedly or egregiously.

Pass interference

Offense – 10 yards from LOS

Defense – 10 yards from LOS

- In addition to normal pass interference rules, any significant physical contact after the ball arrives shall be considered unnecessary roughness. After the ball has been caught any additional attempts to dislodge it will be considered illegal stripping.
- Either receiver or defender pushing off while the ball is in the air.
- Intentionally running into a defender without the ball on a passing play.
- If a receiver's flag is intentionally pulled prior to first touching the ball, this is also considered pass interference.

Taunting

Offense – If occurring on touchdown, a 10-yard penalty will be assessed on the extra point try. If occurring in the field of play, a 10-yard penalty will be enforced.

Defense – 10 yards.

- Any flagrant acts or remarks that mock or bait an opponent are considered taunting.
- Celebration, whether communal or individual, is allowed as long as it does not fall under "Taunting" definition.

Illegal blocking

Offense – 10 yards

- When an offensive player intentionally drives or “pancakes” the defender with which he/she is engaged. Severity could result in an unnecessary roughness and/or a flagrant foul.
- Landing or piling on a defender/player on the ground.
- Chip blocking, elbowing and knee blocking.
- Blocking by initiating or leading with elbows, forearms or shoulders – severity may result in a charging penalty or flagrant foul/unnecessary roughness.
- A crack back or any block on a defenseless defender falls under unnecessary roughness and can result in ejection if determined as intentional.

Delay of game

5 yards

- In addition to the offense not snapping the ball within the 30 second play clock, this can include:
 - Too many players on the field
 - Not wearing required equipment during a play
 - Defense delays or hinders the offense from making the next snap

Illegal formation

Offense – 5 yards

Defense – 5 yards

- Fewer than five players on the line of scrimmage for offense. These five players must be contiguous with the center. There must be one player on each side of the center (within both players arm’s length of the center) and one eligible receiver on each side of the center.
- Fewer than two players on the line of scrimmage for the defense.

Offside

Offense – 5 yards

Defense – 5 yards

- If a defensive player enters the neutral zone before an offensive player commits a false start, the penalty is on the defense, even if no contact is made.

Diving

Offense – 5 yards, loss of down

- Diving forward in an attempt to gain yardage or advance the ball.
- Diving into the end zone or for a first down.
- NOTE: A player is allowed to dive to catch the ball.

Flag guarding

Offense – 5 yards from POI, loss of down

- When a ball-carrier physically prevents a defender from reaching the ball carrier's flags. This could be through covering, knocking hands away, slapping hands away, etc.
- When the ball-carrier holds his/her belt or flags.
- A jersey, towel or any article of clothing that obstructs the flags.
- A ball-carrier jumping for any reason other than avoiding a player lying on the ground or a quarterback jumping to pass.
- If the ball-carrier is wearing an illegal flag (e.g., wrapped flags, improper flags, partial flags, etc.), the ball will be dead at the point where the ball-carrier takes possession of the ball.

A-gap violation

Defense or offense – Live ball foul only. 5 yards from LOS, replay down.

- Any non linemen who makes LOS penetration immediately in the A-gap.
- Any intentional illegal handoff to an ineligible receiver (offensive linemen).

Inadvertent whistle

- If the game official blows the whistle prematurely or by mistake, the ball is dead at the spot where the ball-carrier was when the whistle was blown. If the whistle occurs early during a play and the ball-carrier has not crossed line of scrimmage, then the play and down is to be repeated.

The rules subject to change at the discretion of Clark County Youth Football board of directors.