# Smoky Mountain Social

# Flag Football Rules

11/13/2018

1. SMS TriStar Rule

This rule is the most important. Everyone is here to have fun, meet new people, play sports, and partake in events. Be respectful and conscious of your actions. We take this rule very seriously, as members of SMS we expect fun and inviting games full of sportsmanship and good will. Anyone found to be harassing, threatening, or otherwise a detriment to the TriStar Rule, will be removed from the game immediately, and further discipline will be enacted post game to the extent of suspensions or league banishment. Any player that is suspended or removed from the league will not receive compensations for games not played. Players may request a review of their status after season’s end for the upcoming seasons.

\*\*\*Harassing, threatening, or attitude detrimental to the TriStar Rule includes, but is not limited to unnecessary roughness, fighting, verbal confrontations, threatening harm, and excessive arguing causing play stoppage. Officials have the discretion to determine if any of the above or other situations might violate the TriStar Rule\*\*\*

Sub players are allowed until the last week of the season.

Once SMS is notified you are forfeiting, it is official (you cannot change your mind), and the other team will be notified.

We welcome individual player payments.
We are also proud to welcome those who do not have a full team (small groups and free agents) to participate in our league.

Our primary mission is to make it easier for people to have fun and get involved with social sports and these policies help accomplish that goal.

Because of these policies, all registrations are on a first come first serve basis and any roster that does not reach our standard size (based on each sport) is eligible to receive free agents and or small group by the league. Rosters made up of primarily free agents and or a collection of small groups may field more players than the standard roster size. This policy is in place to help ensure free agent teams are able to consistently field teams each week.

All players must be at least 21 years of age prior to participating in any Match and must be registered and in good standing with Smoky Mountain Social (herein: the “League”).

BASIC RULES

8 v 8 coed

- 5 males max. on the field
- Minimum 5 to play, 1 female

- Running clock, 20 minute per half (only stops in the 2nd half under 2 minutes)

- 1 timeout per half (does not carry over)
-No Cleats are allowed on the National Mall

Game:

- Players must wait 5 seconds on the line to rush the quarterback

- Each team gets a blitz once every set of 1st downs

- Men CANNOT blitz on gender plays

- All receivers are eligible

- NO BLOCKING at all
- NO flag guarding (do not argue with the ref if someone flag guarded)
- NO rushing inside 5 yards of the opponent’s end zone

Captains:

ONLY the captain can ask about a RULES CALL – NOT a JUDGEMENT CALL
DO NOT bother refs over judgment calls (i.e. out of bounds or flag guarding). It slows the game – we will give you a PENALTY if we feel arguing non-rule calls slow down the game

Gender Plays:

- MUST have 1 female in play once every 3 plays

- All men BUT ONE MUST play 10 yards back until the ball is thrown, then they are able to break inside the 10 yard mark on the ball/ball carrier

- The one guy is to guard the QB and can rush ONLY AFTER 5 SECONDS

- If the offense puts more than the minimum number of females on the field, then the defense can designate a male to cover the extra female

- If the operative player has her flags pulled behind the line of scrimmage, the next down will be a gender play again

- A woman CAN blitz the QB

- The defense can play any way they like if the QB is a female (men can stand wherever they want)

- Women scores count for an extra point – even 1 or 2 pt conversions (if a woman throws to another woman that is only 1 extra point)

- With male QB: you CAN have 1 man on the L.O.S. to guard the QB. They CAN rush after a 5 count

- A woman CANNOT hand off to a man – she can throw it forward to a man but he MUST get past the L.O.S.

- If a woman drops back 5 yards and throws it 3 yards, that is good for a gender play, but ONLY if the man gains positive yardage past the L.O.S.

Quarterback Running:

Allowed to run on any play EXCEPT:
Within the 5 yard line
Males in gender plays
Extra Point Conversions:

If your team has used the automatic blitz during the scoring set of downs, you DO NOT have a blitz for the conversion. Ex: you blitz on 2nd down and the team scores on 3rd down, your team CANNOT blitz on the conversion without counting to 5

NO Fumbles:

Any fumble is a dead ball (if a punt hits the ground it is dead at the spot)
Punts:

The offensive team must declare that they are going to punt – NO fakes or blocks allowed
All offensive players MUST stay 10 yards off on the line of scrimmage until the ball is punted
The ball does not need to be hiked – the ball MUST be kicked
Forfeits:

Teams should be present AT LEAST 10 minutes prior to their scheduled game
Teams will have 10 minutes AFTER the scheduled game time to have the minimum numbers of players present – if not, they will forfeit

For all other rules: http://www.usffa.org/rulebook.htm

All teams make the playoffs at the end of the season (unless you forfeit 2x)

Rules in Detail

Gender Plays

We made this rule to make teams get the ladies involved in the entire game, not just 1 play every 3.

- On a gender play, guys must play 10 yards back and can only break on the ball once it is thrown.

- If the offense puts more than the minimum number of females on the field, then the defense can designate a male to cover the extra female.

- On a gender play, if the female gets tagged behind the line of scrimmage, the next down will be a gender play. If the female is a QB on the gender play, then the defense is only allowed to have a female rush the QB. The defense can play zone if the offense has a female QB on the gender play.

- A female score counts for a point extra. Even 1 or 2 pt conversions. (If a girl throws to another girl that is only 1 additional point)

General Play

- You can run on any play except (guys cannot run on a gender play, even if they get blitzed)

- For the conversion play, if you used your blitz during the scoring set of downs, you do not have a blitz for the conversion. Ex: you blitz on any down 1st, 2nd, 3rd or 4th and the other team scores, you do not get a blitz for the conversion. So if you blitz on 1st down and they score on 4th down you do not have another blitz even if they score an 80 yard TD.

- Any fumble is a dead ball. If a punt hits the ground it is dead at the spot.

- Only the captain can ask about a rule call, not a judgment call. Do not bother the refs over judgment calls such as out of bounds because it slows the game.

- On gender plays (with a guy QB) you can have 1 guy on the LOS to guard the QB only.

- On a gender play, a female cannot hand off to a guy. She can throw it forward to a guy but the guy must get past the line of scrimmage. (If a female drops back 5 yards and throws it 3 yards that is good for a gender play, but only if the guy gains positive yardage past the LOS.)

- You have 1 timeout in each half. They do NOT carry over.

- You do NOT have to yell blitz on a blitz.

- On a gender play, all guys besides 1 not guarding the QB must be 10 yards back and can stand anywhere behind that and go inside the 10 yards as soon as the ball is THROWN.

Teams

8 vs 8 Coed

Teams will field 8 players, with a maximum of 5 males on the field at any one time. The typical team will be 5 males and 3 females, but a team may have more females on the field, i.e. 4 males and 4 females. Games will start on time if teams can field the minimum number of 5 players, with at least 1 of those players being female.

8 v 8 Men's League

Minimum of 5 people to play.

Rosters

Rosters are not limited in size; additional players may be added during the season. For any player additions, the player must play at least 2 games in order to be eligible for the playoffs. DURING THE PLAYOFFS ONLY PLAYERS ON YOUR ROSTER WILL BE ALLOWED TO PLAY.

The Field

The field is 80 yards with two 10-yard end zones. In some instances, the field might be shortened by 5 or 10 yards due to field conditions. Lines at both 20-yard lines and the 40-yard line (mid-field) will be marked off. Cones on the side of the field will also mark these lines. Cones will also mark the end zones. Hash marks for extra points will be at 5 yards (1 point conversion) and at 10 yards (2 point conversions).

Pre-game

- Captains will meet at the center of the field before the game to do a coin flip and to discuss any questions regarding the game. This is the time to ask any questions about rules that may be unclear.
- The captains will also determine who will call the coin flip. The designated captain will call it in the air. The coin will be allowed to hit the ground. The referee will then determine on which side the coin landed. The winning captain will have a choice of receiving the ball or deferring the choice. If the captain decides that he/she wants the ball, the losing captain will have the choice of which end zones he/she wishes to defend.
- In the 2nd half, teams will defend opposite goals that they defended in the 1st half. The loser of the toss will get the ball. If the coin toss winner deferred, they will get the ball going the opposite way.

Captains

- Each team will have a designated captain who will be the official representative of the team.
- The captain is responsible for his/her teams and their behavior. Referees and staff will come to the captains if there are any problems or for any information that needs to be given.
- During the game, only captains will talk to the referees. Referees will only recognize that captain. This is to prevent too many people from distracting the referee and it allows the captain to control things (i.e. timeouts).
- Referees will give the time to the captain only when they ask.
- If a captain is not present, the team must designate an on-field captain to take his/her place. The preference is for the QB and the designated rusher to take that role since they are closest to the ball and the referee at all times.

Forfeits

Teams should be present at least 10 minutes prior to the game. Teams will have 10 minutes after the scheduled start time to have the minimum numbers of players present. If they do not, they will have to forfeit

The Clock, Time and the Start of the Game

- Games will be 40 minutes in duration with two 20 minute halves.
- The clock will run continuously in the 1st half. The clock will stop only in the 1st half when a team is attempting an extra point inside of the 2-minute warning and when there is a change of possession.
- The clock will run continuously through the 2nd half until the 2-minute warning.
- At the 2-minute warning, the clock will automatically stop and then restart once the ball is hiked. After that point, the clock will stop for incomplete passes, when a player steps out-of-bounds, turnovers, sacks and when the winning team is on offense and stopped behind the line of scrimmage, and for all types of scoring.
- The clock will restart once the ball is hiked. The clock will not stop for 1st downs after the 2-minute warning in the 2nd half.
- The referee also has the authority to stop the clock at any time for injuries or administrative matters. The clock will start on the hike of the ball. The clock will also stop for time-outs.
- A 16-point mercy rule will keep the clock running even in the 2nd half. You cannot take a knee unless the mercy rule is in effect otherwise it will be considered a sack.

Time-Outs

Each team has 2 time-outs per game, 1 per half. Time-outs will last 1 minute. The clock will restart when the ball is hiked.

Scoring

Touchdowns are worth 6 points. Extra points from the 5-yard line are worth 1 point. Extra points from the 10-yard line are worth 2 points. Safeties are worth 2 points. Turnovers on an extra point conversion may be returned. A return by the defensive team is worth 2 points, even if the offensive team was going for a 1 point conversion.

Safeties

- A safety may be scored when a player is tagged in his/her own end zone when that player is on offense. A safety will also be called if a player snaps the ball out of the end zone.
- The defensive team will be awarded 2 points and then take the ball on their 5-yard line.
- If a player is catching a punt, has not caught it yet, and fumbles in his/her own end zone when he does try initially fielding it, the ball is dead. The receiving team retains possession. The ball is placed on their own 5-yard line and they begin an offensive series.

Operative Player

A female player must be the operative player once every 3 downs. An operative player is an intended receiver in the eyes of the referee, one who actually catches (or attempts to catch) the ball for a positive gain, attempts a pass as a quarterback, or is the primary runner. If acting as the primary runner, the female player will need to gain positive yards for the play to count as a female play.

An operative player is NOT a quarterback who hands the ball off to a male player or snaps the ball into play. If taking part in a “flea flicker” play, for it to count as a gender play, the female receiver must first secure a reception for positive yards before she can lateral the ball to a male player.

If there is a male quarterback on a female play, he cannot run the ball. All other male players must stay on or behind the line of scrimmage until a female touches the ball past the line of scrimmage. ex: They cannot go out for a reception but can move forward after the pass is thrown. The defensive rusher and the QB should also confer with the referee every time they come up to the ball before a play to get the down and also to see if the play needs to use a female as an operative player on that play.

1st Downs

1st downs are made when a team reaches the 20, 40, or 20-yard line. A team has 4 downs to make a first down. If the offensive team does not make a 1st down in four downs, a change of possession occurs. The ball is marked where the player with the ball was tagged.

Punts

- A team will have the option of punting on the 4th down. The offensive team must declare that they are going to punt.
- No fakes are allowed. All offensive players must stay on the line of scrimmage until the ball is punted. The ball does not need to be hiked.
- The ball must be punted and not thrown.
- The defensive team may not attempt a block.
- The receiving team may fair catch the ball or may attempt to advance it.
- Once a punt is dropped or touches the ground the ball is dead, the defense cannot recover a fumble.

Turnovers

- Turnovers may occur by interception. For our purposes, an interception occurs when the ball leaves the possession of the offensive player, is in the air, is recovered by the defensive player, and does not touch the ground at any time.
- An example would be the QB passing the ball and it is intercepted or the RB laterals it to another offensive player and the defensive player catches it.
- Interceptions may be advanced.

Rushing the Passer

- The defense can rush the passer after the Ref, who is on the line of scrimmage, counts 5 Mississippi’s.
- Only 2 defensive players may rush the passer at a time.
- The defensive player is not allowed to cross the line of scrimmage until the count reaches 5.
- Do not float or drift in before the count, as this is a blitz and if you do not have one this will be an illegal rush that will result in a penalty.
- Also, if the QB tries to run, the defensive player may not cross the line of scrimmage until the QB has crossed the line of scrimmage, i.e. the QB crosses the line of scrimmage and then turns back.
- Once the QB hands off/passes to another player behind the LOS, then the defense may rush everybody and no count is needed.
- Additionally, the defense may blitz once every series of downs. No 5 count is needed. If there is someone lined up behind the QB the defense can rush one person unless handed off at which time anybody can rush.

On 1 and 2 point conversions, you can use your blitz if you did not use it since the last 1st down. Ex: if they score on 3rd down and you did not blitz on those downs you can blitz on the conversion

Blocking

No active blocking is allowed. Including throwing "picks" for an offensive teammate without contact.

Inadvertent Whistle

If the referee blows an inadvertent whistle, then the play is dead. If the play was for positive yardage, then it is the offensive teams’ ball at the spot of the ball carrier when the whistle was blown and the down counts. The offensive team may opt to do the play over. If the offensive play was developing in the backfield or if the ball was in flight, then the play is dead. The play will be done over from the line of scrimmage.

Passing

A pass is complete when a player catches the ball with at least one foot in bounds. The same rule applies for interceptions. The other foot may be out of bounds after the catch. If a player catches the ball and is tagged/pushed out of bounds, then it is up to the referee to decide if he/she would have landed in bounds. The play would then stand as a legal reception by the offensive player.

Fumbles

Any time the ball hits the ground the ball is dead, including where it hits for a punt.

Motion

One player may move laterally parallel to the line of scrimmage prior to the play. If the player moves up the field at any time except to set on the line of scrimmage (for at least 1 second) then this is considered an illegal motion.

Penalties

The referee will decide all penalties. The clock will still run when the ref is marking off the penalty. The clock will stop under two minutes in the 2nd half if the offending team is ahead.

5-Yard Penalties

- Shirt-holding (definition at referee discretion, if needed ask to clarify as the ref goes over ground rules.)

- Defensive Pass Interference (10 yds from LOS and an automatic 1st down)

- Any contact with the offensive receiver that hinders their ability to catch the ball. This includes chucking at the LOS or downfield. Inadvertent contact does not count as pass interference.

- Not Using the Operative Player (5 yds from LOS and loss of down)

- If the offensive team does not use a female in one of its’ three consecutive plays, the
penalty will be enforced until a female is used. I.e. it was 2nd down and then it becomes
3rd down and marked off 5 yds.

- Delay of Game (5 yds from LOS)
If the offensive team does not get a play off in 30 seconds once the ball is in play or if the
defensive team interferes with the offensive team at any time to hinder them getting off a
play in 30 seconds.

- Illegal Participation (5 yds from LOS)
More than 8 players on the field or more than 5 males on the field when the ball is
snapped.

- Offensive Offsides (5 yds from LOS).
Any player not being set for 1 second except a player in motion.

- Defensive Offsides (5 yds from LOS)
When the defensive player crosses over the LOS and does not get back or makes contact
when they cross over the LOS.

- Illegal Forward Pass (5 yds from LOS and loss of down).
When the QB crosses the LOS and then throws the ball.

- Intentional Grounding (5 yds from the LOS and loss of down) 10-second run-off, last 2 min.
When the QB throws the ball into the ground or into an area where the referee decides that it was only an attempt to avoid being sacked. If the QB throws the ball out of bounds,
the ball must first cross the LOS. If it does not, a penalty has occurred. Spiking the ball to stop the clock is not a penalty.

10 Yard Penalties

Blocking (10 yds from the LOS).
- When any type of active blocking is engaged by an offensive player. The penalty is 10 yards
from the spot of the infraction.
- Offensive Picking/Offensive Pass Interference (10 yds from LOS).
- When an offensive player initiates contact, such as pushing off. Picking will be called when
a receiver comes off the LOS and picks a defensive player to allow another offensive player to shake that defender. If a catch is made after a pick, it will be ruled no catch.

15 Yard Penalties

Unsportsmanlike Conduct (15 yds from LOS, ejection, and/or suspension).

Always reference Rule #1