

**CITY OF LOS ANGELES  
DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS  
CITYWIDE YOUTH SPORTS BOARD**

**2022 Citywide Tournament Rules**  
**Flag Football**

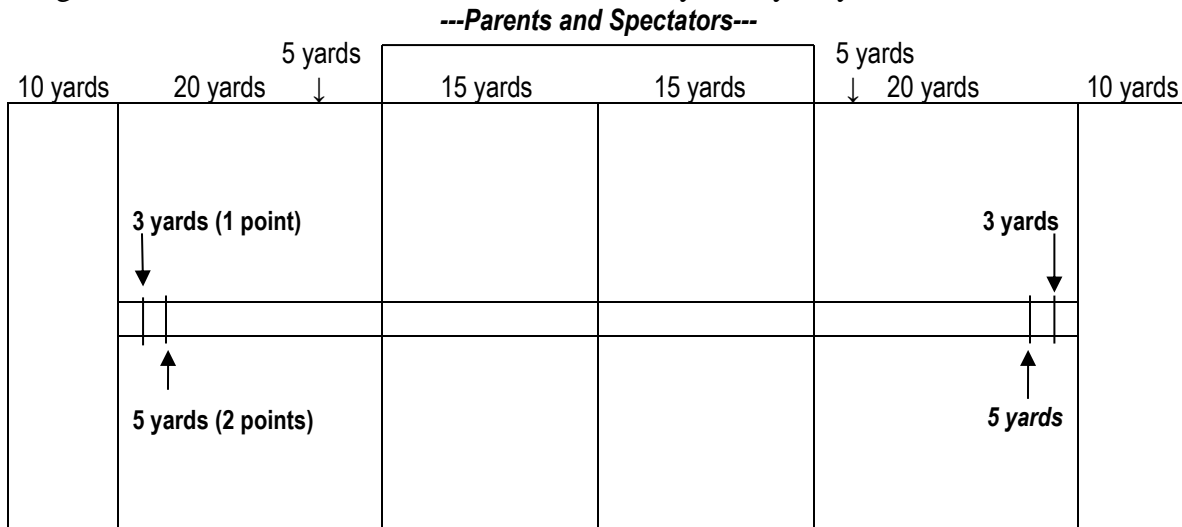
The current High School Federation Flag Football Rulebook will govern play in the Regional and Citywide Flag Football Tournaments with the following rules being the exceptions or clarifications. Rules can be clarified by the Regional or Citywide Youth Sports Board.

**I. EQUIPMENT:**

1. Athletic shoes or rubber cleats are permitted. Metal/hard plastic cleats or spikes are prohibited.
2. The official ball shall be one of the following sizes:
  - a. Minor & Major: Intermediate
  - b. Junior: Regulation
3. Game ball and flags must be Department issued.
4. Regular football equipment such as shoulder pads, helmets, thigh pads, kidney pads, etc... is prohibited.
  - a. **EXCEPTION:** Soft knee pads, soft elbow pads, and mouthpieces.
5. Mouthpieces are recommended and must be contained completely inside the mouth with no part hanging out of the mouth.
6. All team members must wear jerseys of the same color and must have a number.
7. Pants/Shorts- If a player is wearing pants with a belt, belt loops, pocket, exposed drawstring or slit, it must be taped shut prior to the start of the game. Penalty: Player is removed from the game until the uniform is corrected.
8. All players' shirts must be tucked inside their pants at the beginning of each play. If a cut-off shirt is worn, it must terminate one inch above the belt.
9. Flag belts must be sized to fit the player, fastened in the front and be a different color than the players' shorts.
10. **Jewelry** is prohibited. Exception: Medical alert bracelets or necklaces. They must be taped to the body with the medical information visible.

**II. FIELD LAYOUT**

1. The regulation dimensions for all divisions shall be 90 yards by 40 yards.



**Coaches & Players Box-Scorer's Table-Coaches & Players**

2. Coaches and players will be on one side of the field and must remain between the 20-yard line and mid-field. Spectators and parents will be on the other side of the field and must be 5 yards from the sideline.
3. Regional tournaments may adjust the location of the coaches, players, spectators and parents on the field.

**III. ELIGIBILITY**

1. The Recreation Center must have a minimum of 2 teams and 16 players in a division to be eligible to send an All-Star team in that division.
2. A player may not play on more than one team during the Regional or Citywide Tournament.
3. A player is ineligible if they are listed on a high school Varsity or Junior Varsity roster during the fall of the current year.
4. Only registered players listed on the recreation centers official tournament roster are eligible to play.
5. Proof of age is required.
6. Age is determined as of January 1<sup>st</sup> of current year.
  - a. Minor Division: 9-10 years of age
  - b. Major Division: 11-12 years of age
  - c. Junior Division: 13-15 years of age
7. All-Star Tournament teams must meet all eligibility requirements as identified in the General Rules of the Citywide Youth Sports Board Bluebook.
8. All Star Tournament Roster **must have a minimum of 10 players and a maximum of 14 players.**
9. If a player is found ineligible during the tournament, that player will be eliminated. The last game the player participated in will be considered a forfeit. It will have no effect on previous games already played in the tournament.

**IV. THE GAME**

1. A 7-member team plays the game of flag football. It is played similar to regulation football, with the exception that instead of the ball carrier being tackled, his flag belt is removed by a defensive player.
2. A team consists of seven (7) players.
  - a. Any combination of players for line or backfield may be used. All players are eligible.
  - b. A team may begin the game with six (6) players, however, the seventh (7th) player must arrive by the beginning of the second half. If the seventh player fails to arrive by the start of the second half, game will be declared a forfeit.
3. There is **no Grace Period**. Game time is forfeit time.
4. There will be a **coin toss** prior to the game by the referee:
  - a. The captain winning the toss shall choose the options for the first half or shall defer the options to the second half. The options are:
    - i. Whether their team will kick or receive.
    - ii. Which goal their team will defend.
  - b. The captain not having the first choice of options shall exercise the remaining option.
  - c. In the scenario that scrimmage vests would need to be worn by one of the teams, the captain winning the coin toss shall have the option of his team wearing them or having the opposing team wear them.

**V. TIME OF THE GAME**

1. There shall be (4) ten-minute quarters, with an intermission of 5 minutes between halves.
2. The clock shall be stopped only for requested time-outs, injuries, safeties or the end of extra points.
  - a. **Exception:** During the last two minutes of the second half, the clock shall stop according to the National Federation football rules.
  - b. If a coach calls timeout after a touchdown, the clock will not restart until the following kickoff.

3. Each team shall receive **two (2) 1-minute time-outs per half**. Any player on the field may request a time-out. Time-outs do not carry over from the first half.
4. Teams shall change goals between quarters.
5. **Mercy Rule: If a team is leading by a score of 24 points or more, a "running time" clock will be used.** The clock will only stop for charged and official time outs. After any score, the trailing team will be awarded the ball at mid-field in lieu of a kickoff. Should the lead become less than a 24-point margin, the game will revert back to regulation timing and kickoffs.

## **VI. SCORING**

1. Safety, 2 points.
2. Touchdowns, running or passing, 6 points.
3. **Conversion (point after touchdown)**
  - a. **1 point. The ball shall be placed 3 yards from the goal line for the attempt. (Run or Pass).**
  - b. **2 points. The ball shall be placed 5 yards from the goal line for the attempt. (Run or Pass)**
4. Once a team has made their choice on the conversion, they can only change their decision by taking a time-out or if a penalty is called before the play.
5. **Tie Score:** If game remains tied at the end of regulation, the following tie-break scenario will take place:
  - a. Officials will meet with team captains for a coin toss. Winner of the coin toss will have option to have possession of the ball first or defend.
  - b. The ball will be placed at the opponent's 20-yard line. Each team will have one possession (up to 4 downs) to score. Team will also have option to convert for either 1 or 2 points after a touchdown.
  - c. If the 1<sup>st</sup> team scores, the opponent will have an opportunity to match or beat the score.
  - d. The ball will remain live if intercepted, unless it is intercepted in the end-zone, then the ball will be declared dead. The intercepting team will have the option to place the ball at the dead ball spot or revert it back to the line of scrimmage.
  - e. If the game remains tied after each team has had their four downs, the process is repeated until there is a winner. During overtime periods, teams will alternate sides and who chooses to play offense or defense first
  - f. Any penalty would be handled the same as during regulation.
  - g. **No time outs are allowed.**
  - h. **There will be NO kicks of any type permitted.** Any kicks will be penalized as illegal kicks.

## **VII. KICK OFFS AND PUNTS**

1. All kick-offs shall be from the kicking team's 20-yard line. Receiving team's restraining line before the kick off will be 15 yards from the ball at the time of the kick off.
  - a. A place kick must be in a fixed position on the ground or on a tee.
  - b. If the kicking team is offside, the team will be penalized 5 yards and the ball will be re-kicked.
  - c. If the kick goes out of bounds inside the receiving team's 20-yard line, it shall be treated as if it were a touchback. If a kick goes out of bounds in any other zone, the ball will be placed at the point where the ball went out of bounds.
  - d. There are NO onside kicks. The kicking team may not recover their own kick.
2. The offensive team must declare to the referee when they are going to punt. No quick kicks.
  - a. The punting team must have 5 players on the line of scrimmage.
  - b. The defensive team must have 3 players on the line of scrimmage.
  - c. Punts must originate within the center zone.
  - d. Neither team can move until the ball is kicked.
  - e. The punting team has 5 seconds to punt the ball after it has been snapped.
3. No punts or kickoffs may be run out of the end zone. The ball will be placed on the 20-yard line.
4. If the ball touches a receiver and then hits the ground, the ball is dead and belongs to the receiving team. The placing of the ball will be where the ball was last touched, not where it hits the ground.

## **VIII. DOWNS**

1. If the offensive team fails to advance the ball into the next zone in four downs, they shall lose possession of the ball. Their opponent will take possession of the ball at the spot where the ball was declared dead after 4<sup>th</sup> down.
2. The ball is declared dead and the down is ended when the officials sound their whistle.
3. **Inadvertently blown whistle:** The offensive team has the choice of playing the down over or accepting the play. The ball will be marked at the spot where the whistle was blown.
4. If any portion of the ball touches or the point of the ball is over the line, the next zone is played.
5. All players must have their flags on prior to the ball being snapped. Delay of game: **Penalty: 5 yards**
6. Any player who *has possession* or gains possession of the ball while not wearing a flag belt will maintain possession of the ball. *The “inadvertent deflagging” reverts to a one-hand tag between the shoulders and knees.*

## **IX. RUNNING PLAYS**

1. Running line plays, with or without a hand-off or lateral, shall not be permitted within one yard of either side of the offensive center zone. Allowances will be made at the official’s discretion on “Broken Plays”. **Penalty: 5 yards and loss of down.**
2. Defenders shall not impede the progress of a ball carrier in an attempt to remove a flag belt (no holding, blocking, tripping, etc). **Penalty: 10 yards.**
3. No flag guarding shall be made on the part of the carrier to prevent a defensive player from removing their belt. (Keeping their elbow locked over the belt, holding the belt, or simply guarding the flags.) **Penalty: 10 yards and loss of down.**
4. The ball carrier may not butt, ram, straight-arm, or hurdle any player in an effort to prevent having a flag removed. **Penalty: 10 yards and loss of down.**
5. **Point of Emphasis: When there is violent contact between a ball carrier and a defender, (the official must decide whether that contact is tackling, charging, or merely incidental contact), the ball carrier has the primary responsibility in trying to avoid contact.**
6. The ball carrier may not dive in an effort to gain yardage or a touchdown. **Penalty: 10 yards and loss of down.** However, the ball carrier may reach the ball forward as long as he/she doesn’t leave his/her feet.

## **X. PASSING**

1. All players are eligible receivers.
2. The offensive team may throw as many forward passes as long as they originate from behind the line of scrimmage. **Penalty: 5 yards and loss of down.**
3. Pass interference shall be penalized as follows:
  - a. Offensive interference: **10 yards from the line of scrimmage and same down.**
  - b. Defensive interference: **Ball is placed at the spot of the foul and automatic first down. If the interference is in the end zone, the ball will be placed on the one-yard line.**
4. Intentional grounding: There must be an offensive player in the vicinity of where the ball is thrown. A passer may not throw the ball away to prevent loss of yardage. **Penalty: 5 yards from the spot of the foul and loss of down**
5. Roughing the passer: Defensive player can rush with their hands up to knock the pass down, but CANNOT make any contact with the passer unless they are attempting to pull their flag. **Penalty: 10 yards from the end of the play and automatic first down.**

## **XI. HUDDLE**

1. There shall be a 25-second limit to any one huddle once the ball is set. **Penalty: 5 yards.**
2. No hideouts will be permitted. From the time the ball is set ready to play by the official until the snap of the ball, all players at some point in that time must be at least 5 yards away from the sideline. **Penalty: Loss of down.**

## **XII. SNAPPING THE BALL**

1. The ball must be passed *continuously* from between the legs of the center to a teammate. **Penalty: Illegal procedure-5 yards.**
2. **Encroachment:** No player shall encroach on the neutral zone after the ball is ready for play before the snap by touching the ball or an opponent or by being in or beyond the neutral zone to give defensive signals and/or to hinder or deceive an opponent. The play immediately becomes dead. **Penalty: 5 yards**
3. The center may adjust the ball but cannot cause the ball to leave the ground prior to the snap. **Penalty: 5 yards.**
4. A snap from the center to the ground is a dead ball.

## **XIII. FUMBLES**

1. A fumbled or lateraled ball, unless caught before it touches the ground, is dead and may not be advanced by either team. It does not matter if the player has possession of the ball. Placement of the ball will be determined by the last touching.
2. A fumble in the end zone without crossing the goal line on a punt or kick-off is ruled a touchback.

## **XIV. BLOCKING**

1. An offensive player may only use the standard block, with the forearms or open hands with the arms extended. (High School Federation rule).
2. Defensive players are restricted in the use of hands to pushing the shoulders and body of an offensive blocker.
3. The Following blocks are illegal: flying blocks (offensive player leaves his feet), blocks below the waist and clipping (offensive player blocks a defensive player from behind).

## **XV. DEFENSIVE INFRACTIONS**

1. Defenders shall not impede the progress of a ball carrier in an attempt to remove the flag. **Penalty: 10 yards from the spot of the foul.**
2. Intentional flag removal of a player without the ball by the defense. **Penalty: Unsportsmanlike conduct, 10 yards from the point of the infraction or end of play; whichever is greater.**
3. It shall be a foul to tackle, trip, push, hold, or rough another player. **Penalty: 10 yards from the spot of the foul.**
4. Defensive players cannot rush up the middle. (1 yard on either side of the center, at the time of the snap). **Penalty: Illegal procedure, 5 yards.**
5. Players must pull the ball carriers flag for the ball carrier to be considered down. Pushing the ball carrier out of bounds will be considered unsportsmanlike conduct. **Penalty: 10 yards from the spot of the foul. Players guilty of breaking this rule twice will be disqualified from the game immediately.**
6. Enforcement of a penalty by the defensive team committed behind its goal line shall be: Opponent's ball, first down on the offensive 1-yard line or halfway between the previous spot and the goal line, if the previous spot was inside the 1-yard line.
7. No distance penalty shall exceed half the distance from the enforcement spot to the offensive team's goal.

## **XVI. MANDATORY PLAY RULE**

1. **Every player must play a minimum of one full quarter on either offense or defense per half. Coaches must declare their intentions prior to the start of each half. Staff assigned to supervise the game will be responsible for monitoring that teams are fulfilling the mandatory play rule. Teams failing to provide the minimum playing requirements risk penalties ranging from forfeiting the game and/or having the coach removed for the remainder of tournament play.**
2. **Injured players may be substituted and can be put back into the game if able to return to play. The time a player is out due to injury is considered playing time.**

## **XVII. PROTESTS**

1. Protests of rule interpretation will be handled on the spot by sports board members or their representative.
2. To implement a protest, the head coach must call notify the official immediately that there is a protest. The game must come to a standstill until protest is resolved.
3. Protests must be made prior to the next play.

### **XVIII. MISCONDUCT BY PLAYERS, MANAGERS, AND SPECTATORS**

1. Good Sportsmanship among spectators, coaches, players and officials is expected. We require that ALL spectators practice supportive and encouraging behavior at all times.
2. Recreation Directors, paid staff and coaching staff are responsible for the conduct of their fans.
3. If the head coach is ejected from the game, the assistant coach will coach the team. If the assistant coach is ejected from the game while taking place of the head coach, the game will be declared a forfeit.
4. Inappropriate conduct and/or negative gestures are not allowed during any part of the game (e.g. taunting, derogatory comments, distracting players with yelling, stomping or banging devices, using horns/bells/whistles). Failure to comply may result in forfeiting the game and/or suspension.
5. A player/coach ejected from the game will automatically be suspended from their next game. Depending on the severity of the ejection, the Sports Board may implement a multi-game penalty not limited to suspension from the remaining tournament.
6. Any violation of the rules may lead to further discipline including ejection from the game and suspension from the tournament.
7. Referees may bar a player, manager or coach for the entire game for unsportsmanlike conduct, profanity or verbal abuse. **Penalty: 10 yards from the line of scrimmage. If the manager is ejected, the assistant may take over, if the assistant is ejected, the game is forfeited.**
8. Players, managers, and spectators must stay within the team box. **Penalty: 5 yards.**
9. It shall be a penalty to tackle, hack, straight-arm, rip, push, hold, or rough another player. Officials are to be particularly vigilant in preventing the holding of the ball carrier's clothes by a defender. Players twice guilty of breaking this rule shall be disqualified immediately. **Penalty: 10 yards from the point of the foul, or the end of the run, whichever is greater.**
10. Stalling or intentionally delaying the game. **Penalty: 5 yards, and during the last two minutes, the clock will stop until play resumes.**
11. Unfair Act: **Penalty: The referee enforces any penalty he considers equitable, including the award of score. Example: Tackling as a last resort when a touchdown is inevitable.**

### **PENALTIES**

<b>PENALTY</b>	<b>DOWN</b>	<b>DISTANCE</b>
Offside/Encroachment	Same	5 yards
Delay of game	Same	5 yards
Hide out	Loss	0
Illegal procedure (man in motion move up before snap, False start, Center lifts the ball off of ground or snap not between legs, defense has less than 3 players on line of scrimmage on punt).	Same	5 yards
Illegal forward pass	Loss	5 yards
Run up the middle	Loss	5 yards
Illegal use of hands (clipping, holding, block below waist, flying block)	Same	10 yards
Butt, Ram, Stiff Arm, Hurdling	Loss	10 yards
Tackle, Trip, Push, Hold, Rough, Impede, or Charge ball carrier	Same	10 yards
Holding ball carrier's clothes	Same	10 yards
Offensive pass interference	Same	10 yards
Defensive pass interference	1 <sup>st</sup> down	Spot of foul
Flag guarding	Loss	10 yards
<b><i>Roughing the Passer</i></b>	<b><i>1<sup>st</sup> down</i></b>	<b><i>10 yards from the end of play</i></b>

Unsportsmanlike conduct (premature flag pull: possible ejection, abusive language, profanity, fighting)	---	10 yards
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