



TCFFB LEAGUE RULES

#ourkids #ourleague #ourtime

SPRING 2026

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TRI-CITY Flag Football Rules

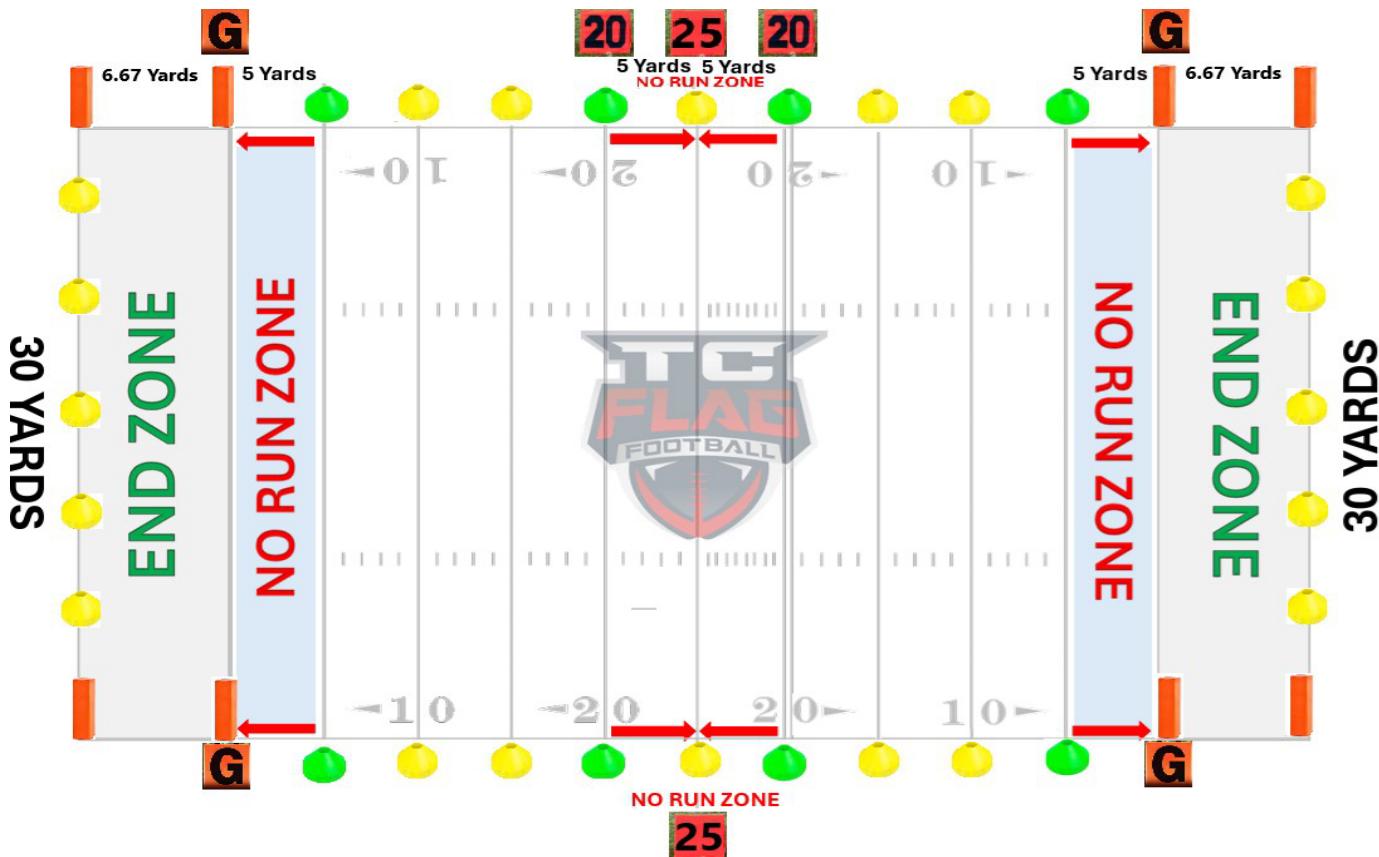
“The Premier League”

TRI-CITY Flag Football is a non-contact, 6 vs 6, co-ed and girls flag football league played on a 50-yard modified football field that is 30 yards wide, midfield is at 25 yards and has 6-7 yard end zones.

For each possession, the offensive team plays for a first down at midfield and a touchdown in the end zone.

Running and passing plays are allowed. However, there are “**no running zones**” near midfield and each goal line.

The defensive team covers receivers, may rush the passer, and pulls flags to simulate “tackles.”



Field Markers	Per field	(ALL markers are to be placed behind green and yellow cones or approximately 8 inches from the sideline)
Pylons	8	(8) Place pylons at all (4) corners of each end zone
G Marker	4	(4) Place each "G" at the front corner of each end zone
20 Marker	2	(2) "20"s - Place on the coach's side, at the 20 yard line
		(1) "25"s - Place on the coach's side at the 25-yard line/midfield.
25 Marker	2	(1) "25"s - Place on the coach's side at the 25-yard line/midfield.
Score board	1	(1) Set up behind the "25" marker on the coach's side
Green cones - no run zone	8	(8) Place on each side of the field at the 5 & 20-yard lines
Yellow cones - sideline & back of endzone	20	(10) Place one cone at each of the following yardage positions on both sides of the field: 10, 15, & 25 (10) Place 5 cones at the back of each end zone, spaced in 15 ft. increments, starting from the pylon

March 6th, 2025

FLAG FOOTBALL BASICS

- Each team's captains will assemble at midfield for the coin toss, which determines first possession to begin play. The visiting team will call the toss. The winner may elect to take possession of the ball or defer to the second half. The loser of the coin toss will choose which direction it will defend.

OFFENSIVE SERIES & POSSESSION RULES



- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its own 5-yard line and has four (4) downs to cross midfield and earn a 1st down.
- Prior to 4th down, prior to crossing midfield, the offensive team must declare "PLAY" or "PUNT".
- "PLAY": if the offensive team fails to cross midfield on 4th down, possession changes, and the defensive team takes over the ball at the spot of the turnover.
- "PUNT": if the punt option is chosen, possession changes, and the new offensive team takes over at its own 5-yard line.
- If the offensive team successfully crosses midfield, it is awarded four (4) additional downs to score.
- If the offense fails to score after crossing midfield with four (4) additional downs, possession changes, and the new offensive team takes over at its own 5-yard line.
- All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yard line.
- Interceptions may be returned, and the ball will be placed at the spot of the tackle.
- Teams change direction of play at the start of the third quarter. At the start of the third quarter **possession is awarded to the team that began the game on defense**.
- For lower divisions, 8U thru 10U, one (1) coach is allowed on field per team.
- For Girls League and co-ed divisions 8U, a side snap of the football is allowed. The football must be set on the ground and the center's feet must be behind the football. For divisions 10U and up, the ball must be snapped between the center's legs to start play.
- Players must attend one practice during the week to be eligible for game play.
- There are no kickoffs, and no blocking allowed.

PLAYERS/GAMES

- Each team must field a minimum of (5) five players at all times.
- Each Team will consist of seven (7) players minimum, with a maximum of ten (10) players.
- Substitutions are **unlimited** and may occur at any **dead ball**, under the following guidelines:
 - a. **Players may enter or exit the game freely during any dead ball**, including timeouts, change of possession, or after a play has ended.
 - b. **All substitutions must be made from the team's sideline** and in a timely manner to avoid unnecessary delays.
 - c. Officials have the discretion to **delay the snap briefly** to allow substitutions but may issue a **delay of game penalty** for excessive or untimely substitutions.
 - d. The intent of this rule is to promote **equal playing time**, especially at the younger levels, and to ensure a smooth and safe flow of the game.

2. Coaching Expectation:

- a. Coaches are strongly encouraged to use the Free Substitution Rule to provide **all players with meaningful playing time** each game. Tri-City Flag Football is a developmental league that prioritizes player experience, growth, and fun over competitive outcome. Coaches who consistently limit participation without just cause may be subject to review by league officials.
- A maximum of **one (1) head coach** and **two (2) assistant coaches** are allowed on the coaches' side of the field. A **team manager** may also be present, but only if they are responsible for operating the scoreboard during that game. All coaches must be wearing their league issued ID.

GAME TIME/OVERTIME

- Games are played with ten (10) minute running quarters, totaling 40 minutes. Each quarter will have a one (1) minute water break between quarters, and a five (5) minute break at halftime.
- Each time the ball is spotted, the offensive team has thirty (30) seconds to snap the ball. A ten (10) second warning may be announced by the referee prior to receiving a delay of game penalty. Teams will receive one warning before a delay of game penalty is enforced.
- Each team is allowed two (2) timeouts per half, with unused timeouts in the first half not carrying over to the second. **Each timeout lasts exactly one (1) minute. Officials will issue a warning whistle at the 45-second mark, and the play clock will restart once the full minute has elapsed.**
- If the score is tied at the end of 40 minutes, teams will move directly into overtime (except Kinder). The following tie breaker system will be used for all overtime games.
 - A coin flip determines possession.
 - The ball is placed at midfield.
 - After three (3) plays, the official will mark where the ball ended up (cone, flag, etc.).
 - The opposing team will then take over at midfield, running their three (3) plays in the same direction.
 - Whichever team gains the most yards on three (3) plays wins the game and is awarded one (1) additional point.
 - If both teams are tied after three (3) plays, the process begins again until a winner is determined.
 - Negative net yards on offense will count against you. The opposing team must still run their 3 plays.
 - If the ball is intercepted and returned for a touchdown, the game is over.

SCORING

- Touchdown: 6 points.
- Extra point: One (1) point (ball placed at 5-yard line) or two (2) points (ball placed at 10-yard line).
- If an extra point try is intercepted and returned, the defense will get one (1) point for a one (1) point conversion and two (2) points for a two (2) point conversion.
- Mercy Rule: If a team is leading by 30 points or more at any time during the 4th quarter, the losing team may decide how to finish the game. They may keep the game as is, play offense only, or play defense only. If the losing team decides to play only offense or defense, scoring stops and the game is technically finished. If the losing team chooses to keep the game as is, the scoring continues, and the game concludes per the normal game clock. When entering scores into the standings, the maximum point differential that can be recorded is 30 points.

RUNNING

- The quarterback may not run with the ball beyond the line of scrimmage at any time.
- Handoffs, laterals, and pitches are allowed as per NFL rules.
- The quarterback may not hand the ball back to the center for a “center sneak.” However, the center is an eligible receiver and may receive a pass.
- “No run zones,” located five (5) yards from each end zone and five (5) yards on either side of midfield are designed to avoid short yardage, power-running situations. The game official will announce **“No Run Zone.”** All passes attempted in this area, **including shovel passes**, must be completed beyond the line of scrimmage.
- Any player who receives a handoff, lateral, or pitch may attempt to complete a forward pass as long as they are behind the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball has been handed off, lateralled or pitched, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- Spinning, juiking, or sidestepping is allowed, and players can leave their feet.
- The ball will be spotted where the ball carrier’s feet are when their flag is *pulled or player is touched (see page 6), **not where the ball is.**

PASSING

- The quarterback will have a seven (7) second “pass clock” in lower divisions 8U thru 10U, and a five (5) second “pass clock” in upper divisions 5th and up. If the quarterback does not release the ball within the five (5) or seven (7) seconds, a quarterback sack will result with a loss of down. Once the ball is handed off, lateralled, or pitched, the five (5) or seven (7) second rule no longer applies.
- Shovel passes are allowed. However, shovel passes in “No Run Zones” must be completed beyond the line of scrimmage to be considered a legal pass.
- Interceptions may be returned with the ball being placed at the spot of the dead ball.

RECEIVING

- All players are eligible to receive passes, including the quarterback (if the ball has been handed off, lateralled or pitched behind the line of scrimmage as per NFL Rules).
- Only one player is allowed in motion at a time and may not move in a forward direction before the ball is snapped.
- A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.
- Receivers must line up at least two (2) yards from either side of the center. Receivers lined up less than two (2) yards from center may receive a 5-yard penalty.

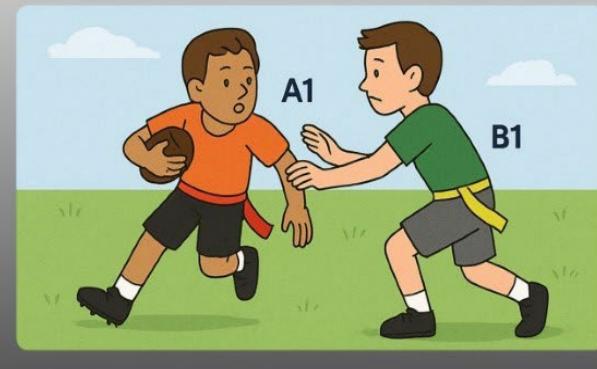
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ACCIDENTAL FLAG LOSS

If a ball carrier's flag(s) fall off unintentionally during a play, the ball remains live until a defender contacts the ball carrier with one or both hands. Upon contact, the official shall declare the ball dead at the spot. No flag pull is required in this situation.

EXAMPLE: A1's flag belt falls off while advancing the ball. B1 touches A1 with one hand. The play is dead at the spot of the touch.



➤ Accidental Flag Loss and Excessive Contact

Play 25-0001: Accidental Flag Loss and Defender Conduct

If a ball carrier (A1) unintentionally loses their flag(s) during a live play (i.e., not as a result of a legal flag pull), and a defender (B1) initiates contact with A1 using one or both hands, the following applies:

- A. The ball is declared dead immediately at the spot of contact.
- B. If the contact by B1 is deemed unnecessary and excessive, placing A1 in a vulnerable position or creating a potential risk of injury, an Unsportsmanlike Conduct penalty shall be assessed against B1.
- C. If, in the judgment of the official, the contact by B1 is violent and with apparent intent to injure, B1 shall be immediately ejected from the game.

Rationale: This rule prioritizes player safety, discourages reckless play, and establishes clear consequences for dangerous conduct following the accidental loss of a flag.

➤ A player running with the ball must make an effort to avoid running over or initiating aggressive contact on the defensive player. A penalty, if called, will be unsportsmanlike conduct.

DEAD BALLS

- Play is ruled “dead” when:
 - The ball carrier’s flag(s) are pulled or *1/2 hand touch. (See page 6)
 - The ball carrier steps out of bounds.
 - A touchdown or safety is scored.
 - Any part of the ball carrier’s body hits the ground.
 - The ball carrier’s flags are not positioned on the side of the hips (slide to back side by tailbone). This is very subjective and up to the official to determine the severity of the issue (i.e., flags moved by attempted flag pull, etc.). Warnings may be given instead of dead ball. It is the responsibility of each coach and player to check flag positioning throughout the game.
 - There are no fumbles. Therefore, if the ball carrier loses the football, the ball will be placed where it hits the ground.

RUSHING THE QUARTERBACK

- All defensive players who rush the quarterback must be:
 - 8U= a minimum of seven (7) yards from the line of scrimmage
 - 10U= a minimum of ten (10) yards from the line of scrimmage
 - 12U,14U,16U= a minimum of twelve (12) yards from the line of scrimmage
 - Girls 12U= a minimum of ten (10) yards from the line of scrimmage
 - Girls 14U= a minimum of twelve (12) yards from the line of scrimmage
- when the ball is snapped.
- No rushing in Kinder division.
- Any number of players can rush the quarterback. **Players not rushing the quarterback may defend up to the line of scrimmage until the ball leaves the quarterback’s hands.**
- Once the ball is handed off, lateralled, or pitched, the seven (7) or ten (10) yard rush rule is no longer in effect, and all defenders may go beyond the line of scrimmage. A special marker, or the official , will designate seven (7) or ten (10) yards from the line of scrimmage.
- No blocking, physical tackling, or stripping of the ball is allowed. Any attempt to strip the ball from the quarterback or ball carrier may result in a personal foul/un-sportsman like conduct, or roughing penalty.
- If a field Official, Referee, or Commissioner witnesses any acts of tackling, elbowing, intentional roughing, blocking, or any un-sportsman like act, the game will be stopped, and the player, coach, or fan may be ejected from the game.
 - The penalty, if called, is a dead ball at the point of infraction.
 - If the penalty is against the offense, 10 yards and loss of down from original line of scrimmage will result.
 - If the penalty is against the defense, 10 yards and automatic first down will result (unless play resulted in a touchdown).

****FOUL PLAY IS NOT ACCEPTABLE****

- Trash talking is unsportsmanlike and illegal. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. (Trash talk is talk that may be offensive to officials, opposing players, teams, or spectators.) If trash talking occurs, the referee may give one warning. If it continues, the player(s), coaches, and fans will be subject to ejection from the facility.
- The game will not continue until the ejected party has left the facility. If the ejected party does not leave, the official will immediately forfeit the game and award the win to the opposing team.
- Anyone ejected from a game (player, coach, fan), for any reason, will not be allowed on the facility for the next game.
- Anyone ejected a 2nd time during the season, the individual(s) will not be allowed on the facility for the next two (2) games and are subject to dismissal from the league.

Unsportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated.



PENALTIES

- All penalties will be called by the game official and may be declined by the opposing team.
- Game officials determine incidental contact that may result from the normal run of play. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage except defensive interference and flag guarding.
- Only the team captains or head coach may ask the officials questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players or assistant coaches cannot question judgment calls.
- Games cannot end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.

DEFENSE:

- Offside
 - 5 yards and repeat down.
- Interference
 - Spot foul and automatic 1st down.
- Illegal Contact – holding, blocking, etc.
 - 10 yards and automatic 1st down.
- Illegal Flag Pull – before receiver has ball
 - 10 yards and automatic 1st down
- Illegal Rushing – starting rush from inside 7-yard or 10-yard marker
 - 10 yards and automatic 1st down
- “Last Man Standing” – last defender tackles ball carrier, instead of pulling flag
 - Automatic touchdown
- Stripping the Ball – Personal Foul
 - 10 yards and automatic 1st down



OFFENSE:

- Illegal Motion – more than one person moving, false start, etc.
 - 5 Yards and repeat down
- Illegal Forward Pass – pass thrown from beyond line of scrimmage
 - 5 yards and loss of down
- Offensive Pass Interference - Illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender
 - 10 yards and loss of down
- Flag Guarding
 - Spot foul and 10 yards
- Charging – Intentionally running over defender
 - 10 yards and loss of down
- Delay of Game
 - Clock stops, 5 yards and repeat down
- Impeding the Rusher - Personal Foul
 - 10 yards and loss of down
- Two (2) yards spacing from center
 - 5-yard loss

STANDINGS

Official league standings and playoff seedings are determined based on the following:

- Win/loss winning percentage with all games included.
- Head-to-head
- Average points allowed per game
- Coin Flip

Playoff brackets - All 1st place teams receive top seeds, then the rule above is administered.

UNIFORM/EQUIPMENT/ATTIRE

- Cleats **without** metal spikes are permitted and pregame inspections will be made for player safety purposes.
- All players are required to wear a protective mouthpiece; no exceptions!!
- Official Tri-City jerseys, shorts, and flags must be worn during play.
- Team flags must be of a different color than the uniform shorts.
- Shorts must be league issued.
- Players choosing to wear tights or leggings must wear them underneath their league-issued shorts. Only solid **black** or solid **white** colors are permitted. No other colors or patterns are allowed.
- No stripes or pockets are allowed on the shorts unless they are an official Tri-City uniform.
- No jewelry (necklaces, bracelets, etc.), baseball style caps, or sweatpants will be allowed during play.
- Referees and league officials will determine if there are any uniform violations resulting in non-participation.
- Uniform/Equipment violations must be addressed and corrected immediately. If a violation is not corrected, the team's head coach may be subject to a single game suspension and/or forfeit.

Tri-City Flag Football expects our coaches to coach, our players to play, and our fans to cheer.

Tri-City's ABCs of Flag Football

Attitude, **B**ravery, **C**haracter, **D**edication, and **E**xecution...