

**Flag**

**Rule**

**Book**



## **GENERAL LEAGUE RULES**

This rulebook is to be used by all teams playing flag football in the Class Athlete League. The rules are based on NFL Flag Football rules, with some modifications made by Class Athlete management.

- All teams are co-ed.
- There are no try-outs.
- Each child plays a minimum of half the game during the regular season and participate during the playoffs and is welcome regardless of gender, skills, or ability.
- Officials will explain all rule infractions to players.
- In the spirit of CA, teams are not permitted to run up scores. Maximum score differential is 21 points. Rotating player positions, requiring additional passing, and adjusting playing time to accommodate uneven competition is required.
- The referee's decisions are final.
- There are no game protests.

## **SPECTATORS' RESPONSIBILITIES**

While enthusiasm and cheering can be inspiring, and it is natural to get caught up in the emotion of the game, spectators should take care to follow proper sideline etiquette.

Spectators will refrain from any negative comments towards any players, coaches or officials. This rule applies to all languages.

Spectators may not argue, yell at or question the coaches and officials during game play. Any disagreement with coaches, officials' actions or other concern must be brought to a CA official's attention, in civil tones and away from sight and sound distance from the players. Spectators may not disagree with referee's judgment calls.

Spectators should refrain from coaching from the sidelines.

Spectators must sit or stand at least 3 yards beyond the sidelines on the opposite side from the team. Any chair, cooler, tent pole or other item must be clear of the buffer beyond the sidelines. These are safety concerns for our student athletes.

Spectators must stay on their side of the field, as the players and up to 3 coaches can be on the player sideline.

Spectators may not be behind the end zones, as it is not safe for the spectator, nor the players.

Spectators may not use any noise making or voice enhancing devices at any games. Including but not exclusively: vuvuzelas, horns, noise-makers, drums, air-horns or bullhorns

Coaches have complete and total responsibility for their team's spectators. Referees will ask coaches to speak to any spectators that are not following these rules. If a coach is unable to

control their team's spectators they will be warned by the referee and/or CA official for the first infraction and may be ejected for continued infractions. Continued infractions will cause the game to be called off and forfeited. CA officials may ask any unruly spectators to leave the facilities if they cannot conform to the rules as they are here and in the CA Code of Conduct.

***Any coach or spectator ejected will be deemed to be in violation of the League's Code of Conduct and will be subject to disciplinary action and MUST LEAVE the facility immediately.***

## **COACHES**

All CA coaches are volunteers. The most important responsibilities of a CA flag football coach are:

- to provide a safe, healthy environment for the practice and play of flag football, and
- to provide mature, adult supervision for young athletes.

Coaches have a leadership role. They are a role model and should set an example for each player. For coaches to succeed, and for the kids to realize the best the sport has to offer, coaches must adhere to the Class Athlete Coach's Code of Conduct.

Coaches shall not place the value of winning over the safety and welfare of players.

Coaches shall extend respect and courtesy to game and competition officials.

Coaches shall not make demeaning or derogatory comments or gestures directed towards any official, player, opponent or spectator.

Coaches must always demonstrate by actions exceptional sportsmanship. They should be the first to congratulate the work of the referee and guide their team to a post game handshake.

Coaches and the team must stay in its designated team area. A coach or player who goes into the other team's areas can be penalized. The head coach is allowed to have one assistant coach in their team's bench area during the game.

Coaches shall never be on the field of play unless to officiate the game. Exceptions are only with the U6, U8, U11 (Fall Season) or U6, U8, U10, and U12 groups (Winter/Spring Seasons), where we allow on-field coaching.

In the event of an injury, coaches will wait for the referee to instruct them to enter the playing field.

The coaches, through their actions, are responsible for teaching the children how to deal with winning and losing a game. This includes how to deal with questionable calls, difficult parents and other coaches. The league will remove a coach from his duties for inappropriate behavior that includes but is not limited to:

- Disagreeing with an official.
- A negative discussion of the game with the other coaches.
- A negative discussion of the game with parents.
- Inappropriately ending a game by not congratulating the other team or inappropriate behavior when congratulating the other team.
- Negative comments or gesture towards a player, opponent, official or spectator.

Concerns regarding players, parents or officiating should be handled via the phone on the following Monday by contacting the CA director. If directing concerns to the on field CA coordinator, the tone and volume of the discussion must be civil. No verbal abuse, loud discussions or disagreements within sight of any players will be tolerated.

## **THE FIELD**

**Teams will occupy the same area of the field sidelines for the entire game and not cross the midfield area into the other team's area. (No Exceptions)**

Spectators will occupy the opposite side from the team benches. At no time can spectators or coaches be behind the end zone area.

The field size will be determined by the logistics and layout of the available facilities.

## **AGE DIVISIONS**

Winter and Spring seasons: 6 and under (U6), 8 and under (U8), 10 and under (U10), 12 and under (U12), 14 and under (U14), 17 and under (U17).

Fall Season: 6 and under (U6), 8 and under (U8), 11 and under (U11), 14 and under (U14).

The athlete's age is based on their age on the last day of the season.

## **NUMBER OF PLAYERS**

\* All age divisions play with five players on the field, with the exception of the U6 and U8 groups. In the U6 the coach will be a 6<sup>th</sup> player during the whole game, as he/she is the team quarterback. In the U8 the coach will be a 6<sup>th</sup> player during the first half, as he/she is the team quarterback.

***\*In the event of roster size changes throughout the age division larger or smaller team sizes may be required and will be determined prior to the start of the season.***

## SUBSTITUTIONS

Substitutions are unlimited. The referee is the only person that can stop a substitution.

## EQUIPMENT

For all practices and games, players must wear cleats (rubber, as metal is not allowed).

The league provided shirts and shorts with no pockets should be worn for all games. All shirts must be tucked in.

Players may not wear watches or jewelry or other non-uniform items except for Medic Alert Labels that must be worn inside the jersey and taped to the body.

Hair control devices are allowed if made of soft material and not worn for adornment.

Hair ties must be of soft material.

Eye glasses, unless of athletically approved construction and containing shatter-proof lenses, cannot be used.

**Hard casts, even if covered by soft material, are not allowed on the playing or practice fields.**

**For safety reasons for all players, no exceptions will be permitted to any equipment rules.**

**The referee or a CA Coordinator will be the final judge as to what is unacceptable. Those decisions are final.**

## REFEREE

For all age groups except U6, U14 and U17, one referee will be provided for each game. For the U14 and U17 age group, two referees may be used. For U6 division, each team is responsible for providing a referee for the game. Typically both coaches can officiate the game.

**Referee rulings are final. Coaches, parents and spectators may not question the referee's decisions on field. Any disputes, questions or disagreements must be handled away from the players with the CA coordinator.**

## **REFEREE RESPONSIBILITIES**

It is the referee's responsibility to be in control at all times. The children are there to have fun and learn the game of flag football. For all infractions the referee will explain what was done incorrectly, without coaching.

The most common problem is excessive physical contact between two players, e.g. pushing and shoving. The referees must first tell the violators that this is not acceptable. If a problem continues, then the offending player must sit out while the player's own coach discusses the needed adjustments. It is the referee's responsibility to be in control of the game and flow of play. Coaches have authority only over their own players.

The referee can stop the game at any time to give aid to an injured player. While an injured player is being attended, all players in the field will drop to a knee in their spots until the player is back up and escorted to the sidelines or continues playing. All parents and spectators should applaud as a sign of encouragement for the injured player. The referee and coach will call over the injured player's parent or guardian to assist if necessary. Parents should not enter the field until called over.

## **CANCELLATION & BAD WEATHER**

Teams are expected to attend all scheduled games regardless of conflicts and number of players. It is better to show with less than a full complement of players than to not show at all. Conflicts must be reported to the CA director not less than one full week prior to play.

Games will be terminated at the CA director's discretion if bad weather approaches after games have started. Any visible or audible sign of lightning or thunder will result in cancellation of play.

Seminole County parks have an early lightning detection and warning system. If the park siren sounds, all CA activity must cease until the systems all clear siren sounds. Practices can be cancelled by the team's coach if the siren is activated. Class Athlete officials onsite will determine if games are cancelled or delayed when the siren is activated.

## GAME RULES

- 1. 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 or pick a number of 1 or 2.
- 2. The winner of the toss** can choose to play on offense first or defer to the second half.
- 3. The offensive team takes possession at the 5-yard line.** The offensive team has 4 plays to cross midfield, and 4 more to score a touchdown.
- 4. If the offense fails to score or cross midfield,** the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over at its 5-yard line.
- 5. All possession changes,** except interceptions, start at the offense's 5-yard line.
- 6. Teams change sides after the first half.**
- 7. The maximum point differential in any game will be 21 points as recorded by our staff regardless of actual score.**

**Class Athlete will provide all game balls and game flags. You are not allowed to play with your own equipment. This will keep consistency on flag sizes and ball sizes.**

**Running Up Scores:** Coaches are required to keep their team from purposely running up the score if they have a 3-touchdown lead. Coaches are expected to be creative while encouraging fair play. Coaches should encourage their team to run more often when they have a substantial lead

**Game timing:** Games are played on a 45-minute continuous clock, only stopping for timeouts. Each team has 2 timeouts per half.

**Halftime:** Is a maximum of three minutes long.

**Snapping the ball:** Once the ball is placed at the line of scrimmage by the referee, the offensive team has 30 seconds to snap the ball, or a delay-of-game penalty will be applied.

**Stopping the clock:** Referees can stop the clock at their discretion. The clock will stop if a player is injured and will not restart until the player is removed from the field.

## SCORING

**Tied scores:** During regular-season play, a game can end in a tie. During the playoffs, if the game is tied, a coin flip will ensue and each team will start one offensive series from midfield. If it remains tied after one overtime, each team is required to go for two points on their second

possession. There are no additional timeouts in overtime, but you can use ones left over from the second half, if you had any remaining.

**Scoring:** A touchdown is 6 points, there is a 1-point PAT (taken from the 5-yard line in a must-pass situation) or a 2-point PAT (taken from the 12-yard line and the offense can either run or pass, but the defense can also return it for 2 points if the ball is turned over).

## **RUNNING THE BALL**

**The spot:** The ball will be spotted where the hips were when the flag was pulled, not where the ball is.

**The quarterback:** The quarterback can only run once every four plays. (This means once he runs, 3 legal plays have to be executed until he/she can run again).

**No-run zones:** There are “no-run zones” in the 5 yards before the first-down marker and the 5 yards in front of the end zone.

**Spinning:** It is allowed, but the runner must clearly have one foot on the ground.

**Diving/Jumping forward toward a player(Hurdling):** Jump cuts sideways are allowed. NO JUMPING STRAIGHT UP TO AVOID A FLAG PULL.

**Flag-guarding:** If a player is blocking access to the flag, a penalty will be assessed.

**Flag obstruction:** All jerseys must be tucked in before play begins. The flags must be on the player’s hips and free from obstruction.

## **PASSING THE BALL**

**Shovel passes:** Are allowed, but must be received in front of the quarterback.

**Pass clock:** The OFFENSIVE TEAM has seven seconds to move the ball forward, either by running or passing. The ref will be counting with their hand movement.

## **RECEIVING THE BALL**

**Motion:** Only one player is allowed to be in motion at one time, and no motion is permitted toward the line of scrimmage.

**Inbounds:** A player must make the catch with one foot inbounds for it to be a completion. Although it has to be the first foot that lands.



**Simultaneous Possession:** In case of simultaneous possession by both the offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.

## **RUSHING THE PASSER**

**7-yards away:** All players on the defensive team can rush the opposing quarterback from 7 yards away from the line of scrimmage. Players not rushing the QB can defend at the line of scrimmage. (U8 can rush the QB in the second half only (no rushing coaches) and on each side of the half field mark)

**Hand-off:** Once the ball has been handed off, all defenders can go after the ball carrier.

**Not required:** Teams do not have to rush the quarterback.

**No contact:** Players can attempt to block a pass, but no contact can be made with the QB in any way.

**No impeding:** If, in the opinion of the referee, the offense purposely impedes the rusher, a penalty can be assessed.

**A sack:** The ball is placed where the QB's hips are when the flag is pulled.

## **PULLING FLAGS**

**Legal pull:** Takes place when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball and has their flag pulled. The defending player should stop and hold the flag up. This helps with the flow of the game.

**Diving for Flags:** Defenders can dive to pull flags, but cannot tackle, hold or run through a ball carrier when pulling flags.

**Stripping:** It is illegal to strip or pull the ball from a ball carrier's hands at any time.

**Inadvertent flag fall:** If a player's flag accidentally falls during a play, the play is down immediately at that spot. If the center snapping the ball does not have flags and the ball is hiked, the play is dead and the down counts because the first person to handle the ball did not have flags.

- A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags of a player who is not in possession of the ball.

## **FORMATIONS**

**Line of scrimmage:** An offensive team must have a minimum of one player at the line of scrimmage (the center is included).

**Movement:** A player who is set and moves prior to the snap will receive a false-start penalty.

**The snap:** The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between his/her legs to a player in the backfield, and the ball must completely leave his/her hands. (Ages U10 and up) – **No Center sneak forward between the legs.**

## UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

If the referee witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking, the game will be stopped and the player will potentially be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the referee's discretion.

**Offensive or confrontational language:** Is illegal. The referee has the right to determine offensive language. One warning will be given. If it continues, the player will be ejected and thus suspended for the next game.

## END OF GAME PROCEDURE

All players and coaches must shake hands at the conclusion of every game. Failure to demonstrate sportsmanship will result in disciplinary action.

## PENALTIES

### 5-YARD PENALTIES

- Delay of game (30 seconds to run play)
- Flag guarding (from spot of foul; loss of down) – if first down on the play was established prior to the penalty, you lose 5 yards and it will be second down.
- Illegal Rush/Defensive Offsides - (when a player rushes from inside the 7 yard rush cone, if the QB uses a hard count to pull the rusher inside the cone and the ball is snapped, as long as the rusher resets behind the rush cone, they can still rush)
- Offensive false start (replay of down; play is dead)
- 7 seconds to run or pass (loss of down)
- Illegal forward pass (loss of down)
- Charging/blocking/jumping (spot fouls; loss of down) – if first down on the play was established prior to the penalty, you lose 5 yards and it will be second down.
- Illegal QB run, can run 1 out of every 4 plays (loss of down)
- Illegal run (in no run zone, center sneak w/o exchange) (loss of down)
- Defensive holding/contact (automatic first down)
- Illegal Flag Pull – Pulling a flag before the receiver catches or possesses the ball (automatic first down)

### **10-YARD PENALTIES**

- Offensive pass interference (loss of down)
- Offensive Holding (loss of down)

### **15-YARD PENALTIES (ALL AUTOMATIC FIRST DOWNS)**

- Unsportsmanlike (rude, confrontational, language)
- Roughing passer (cannot touch QB)
- Taunting
- Tackling

### **SPOT FOULS**

- Defensive pass interference – (automatic first down)

### **RUSH ZONES**

- 7 yards from line of scrimmage
- Short rush on goal-line plays

### **NO-RUN ZONES**

- 5 yards going into midfield
- 5 yards going into the end zone

### **QUARTERBACK**

- Can only run once every 4 downs (3 legal plays must be run in between)

### **FORWARD PASS**

- Must be completed in front of the throwing player

### **7 SECONDS TO THROW**

- Regardless of laterals, ball must go forward at 7 seconds

### **TIMEOUTS**

- Each team has 2 per half

### **CONVERSIONS**

- 1 point is from 5-yard-line (pass only)
- 2 points from 12-yard-line (pass or run) and can be returned for 2 pts.

### **OVERTIME**

- Only in the playoffs ... possession starts at 50, 4 downs to score and can go for either 1 or 2 for conversion; must go for 2 if still tied after 1 possession

### **STANDINGS TIEBREAKER**

- First tiebreaker is head-to-head
- Second tiebreaker is point differential
- Third tiebreaker is coin flip

**SIDELINES**

- Maximum of 2 coaches per team

**TIME**

- We have a running clock (only timeouts or injuries stop clock)

## **CLASS ATHLETE (CA)**

### **Code of Conduct**

The CA is meant to provide a positive environment for children to enter athletics without the pressure of having to be No. 1 or “The Best”. CA emphasizes teamwork and sportsmanship above winning. With that, we ask that all players, parents/guardians, and coaches please read the following information. By signing the CA player application and waiver you agree to all the provisions of this code of conduct.

I understand that should my behavior violate this code of conduct, I will accept any disciplinary action, up to and including permanent ejection, as determined by league officials. I also understand that failure to abide by these rules will result in forfeiture of all monies paid for my registration.

### **Players**

1. I will treat my teammates, opponents, coaches, parents, and all others involved in CA with respect at all times
2. I will give my full attention to my coach and do my best to follow instructions.
3. I will always give my best effort in both practice and during games.
4. I will encourage and help my teammates and others who may not be as skilled at sports as I am.
5. Under no circumstance will I engage in name calling, taunting, or make derogatory or profane remarks to any coaches, officials, teammates or opposing players.
6. I will always congratulate my opponents effort at the end of every game regardless of the score.
7. I WILL HAVE FUN!

### **Parent(S)/Guardian(S)**

1. I will support my child unconditionally regardless of how well he/she performs.
2. I realize that who wins or loses is of little consequence. I will not place pressure on my child to win or engage in conduct that is adverse to the instructions of the coaches and staff of CA.
3. I will support the coach in his/her efforts to teach skills, teamwork, and good sportsmanship to the players. This includes ensuring that my child attends all scheduled practices and games as possible.
4. I will not seek special treatment nor ask for special privileges for my child.
5. I will applaud the efforts of all of the players in the games. I will never criticize another player.
6. I will not embarrass my child or myself by criticizing or yelling at officials, coaches, players, other spectators, or league directors. All forms of hostility toward an official, coach, child, opposing team parent, or league director are unacceptable and have no place in this league.

7. I will be responsible for compliance of this code of conduct for any additional family members, friends or spectators that I invite to the games.
8. I will help the team whenever possible by providing my services as requested by the coach or team parent.
9. I will remember that this is my child's sport and not my second childhood.
10. I WILL HAVE FUN!

## CLASS ATHLETE (CA)

### Coaches' Code of Conduct

1. I understand that as a coach or official, I must be a positive role model for the players and parents, and that I will exert a tremendous influence, either good or bad, in the education of the players. I will strive to instill in every child a sense of self-esteem, responsibility, confidence, dignity, and self discipline, through an emphasis on fair play, teamwork, leadership, scholarship, respect, and the rules of CA sports.
2. I will never place the value of winning, or my own personal satisfactions, above the value of instilling the highest desirable ideals of character, fair play and sportsmanship.
3. As a coach or official, I will devote time, thought, planning, and study to the rules of the game. I will prepare a practice and game plan realizing that this will best enable me to teach team sports. I will make every effort to attend all league provided training and meetings.
4. I agree that CA sports are intended to be enjoyable experiences for everyone involved and as a coach or official, I will set a fun tone for both practices and games. I will also strive to create an environment that eliminates a child's fear of failure and promote the challenges of learning new skills. I will ensure that each child has the opportunity to play a roughly equivalent portion of each game.
5. As a coach, I am totally responsible for my team's players, staff, and spectators. I am also responsible for instructing everyone on the league's expectations for game field behavior. All forms of hostility toward an official, coach, child, opposing team parent, or league director are unacceptable and have no place in this league.
6. I will take an active role in the prevention of drug, alcohol, and tobacco use, and under no circumstances will partake or allow these activities to occur during practices or games.
7. As an example to the children, before and after the game, I will establish a good sportsmanship tone by exchanging friendly greetings. I will teach the children that teammates, opponents and officials are entitled to be treated with respect and dignity, and if my team should lose, then their focus is on improving on the team's performance and not on what the other team, coach, or official did.
8. Officials will have the total respect and support of the coach. I will not indulge in conduct that will incite players or spectators against the officials. Public criticism of officials or touching of the officials is unethical and will result in disciplinary action.
9. I WILL HAVE FUN!

I understand that should my behavior violate this code of conduct, I will accept any disciplinary action as determined by league officials.