



FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

// QUICK LINKS

[Player Eligibility](#) // [Game Play](#) // [Golden Rule](#) // [Shirt Notice](#) // [General Policies](#)

// PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

1. All Players must be at least 21 years of age and have current, adequate health insurance.
2. All players must be properly registered on a team during the season for which they are playing.
 - a. If a player is registered on more than one team within the league, they may only play for one team in the playoffs.
 - b. All players must agree to the Fray Liability Waiver as described in the Fray Terms and Conditions section of Player Registration.
3. Any use of an ineligible player will result in a forfeit.

// GAME PLAY

1. Starting the Game: The game will start with rock, paper, and scissors by the host, followed by controlled possession. There are no kickoffs.
 - a. The winning team will then have one of three options: Offense, Defense, or Direction. The team that started the game on defense will start the second half on offense and vice-versa. Teams will also reverse the direction of play.

- b. **Flag Leagues:** possession starts ten (10) yards/paces from the goal line
- 2. Scoring: To score, the ball must cross the goal line with the ball carrier establishing/maintaining possession in bounds.
 - a. Touchdown = 6 points
 - i. One (1) Point Attempt - five (5) yards/paces
 - ii. Two (2) Point Attempt - ten (10) yards/paces
 - iii. **Flag Leagues:** Extra point attempts may NOT be intercepted and returned for points.
 - b. Safety = 2 points
 - i. The team on defense receives 2 points and then starts a new possession from their own 10-yard line. A safety will be scored if a player is:
 - 1. Tagged down in their own end zone (not on a punt return).
 - 2. Runs out of bounds in their own end zone.
 - 3. Snaps the ball out of the endzone.
 - 4. The offense fumbles the ball in their own end zone.
 - ii. A player having intercepted a pass or received a punt in the end zone cannot be tagged in the end zone for a safety unless they had previously crossed the plane of the end zone with the ball.
- 3. Line of Scrimmage:
 - a. **Flag Leagues:** The line of scrimmage is established at the location of the ball when the ball carrier is downed. Ball extension for additional yardage is permitted.
- 4. First Downs: The offense has four downs to gain another first down or score.
 - a. **Flag Leagues:** First downs are earned each time the ball reaches the next marker from where the ball was originally spotted.
 - b. Offensive teams may elect to punt on fourth down.
- 5. Dead Balls: Play will continue until:
 - a. The ball carrier is downed.
 - i. **Flag Leagues:** The ball carrier is deflagged by an opponent or downed by a one-hand touch. One-hand touch is in effect if a player's flags fell off inadvertently and/or were illegally removed prior to catching the ball.
 - b. The ball carrier goes out of bounds.
 - c. The ball carrier scores a touchdown or extra point.

- d. The ball carrier's knee or elbow touches the ground.
 - e. The defense scores.
 - f. The ball touches the ground as a result of a fumble, punt or incomplete pass.
 - g. The referee sounds a whistle.
 - i. Inadvertent Whistle - If the referee inadvertently blows a whistle after the receiver has caught the ball or is running, the ball is dead at that point. If an inadvertent whistle is blown before the quarterback has thrown the ball or the ball is in mid-air, then the play will be redone.
6. Receivers: All players are eligible receivers. Receivers need only one (1) foot in-bounds with possession of the ball to be considered a catch.
- a. If a player runs out of bounds (end zone or sideline) prior to a pass, they become ineligible unless a defensive player forces them out of bounds.
 - b. If a receiver is in midair, catches the ball, and is forced out of bounds by a defender prior to landing, the pass will be considered complete.
 - c. **Flag Leagues:** Offensive players may dive to advance the ball further as long as they do not initiate contact.
7. Quarterback Run & Rushing:
- a. The quarterback can run the ball if the defense rushes in following the rush count.
 - b. There is no immediate rush. The defense cannot rush the quarterback until:
 - i. **Flag Leagues:** A 5-one thousand rush count followed by the word "GO!" by the Line Judge. The count will be as follows: "1- One Thousand, 2- One Thousand, 3- One Thousand, 4- One Thousand, 5- One Thousand, GO!!" The defense may not cross the line of scrimmage until the referee says "GO!"
 - ii. The quarterback does a hand-off, lateral, or pass before or after the rush count.
 - c. Silent snaps are not permitted. The player calling the snap cadence must receive the snap. The player receiving the snap may not be in motion.
 - i. If the ball hits the ground on the snap, the play is "dead", the ball is spotted where it hit the ground, and it is a loss of down (i.e. if it was 1st down during the bad snap, it is now 2nd down).
8. Blocking & Contact: All players must attempt to avoid contact with other players. Blocking at or behind the line of scrimmage and/or downfield is not permitted, and aggressive contact and the "bump and run" are not permitted. Moving picks are regarded as illegal blocking.
- a. **There is no contact at the line of scrimmage.**

- b. Players acting as the offensive line must have their hands behind their backs or at their sides when protecting their quarterback from pursuing defensive rushers.
 - c. The offensive line can position their body at any particular angle in an attempt to direct the rushers to a particular area, but they may not physically direct them.
9. Punts: A punt must be declared and cannot be faked. A team does not have to snap the ball during a punt as a dropped snap during a punt is not a fumble. The receiving team may not raise hands or jump to block a punt.
- a. Punts may be a kick, or they may be thrown.
 - b. Punts are “open” plays.
 - c. The kicking team may not cross the line of scrimmage until the ball is kicked. The kicking team cannot recover their own punt. If the kicking team touches the ball before the receiving team, it is a dead ball and is spotted where it was touched.
 - d. There is no minimum number of players required on the line of scrimmage during a punt.
 - e. If a punt is caught, it is a live ball and is returnable.
 - f. The receiving team can run up the field but cannot block.
 - g. If the ball comes into contact with the ground after it has been punted, it is a dead ball and may not be returned. The ball is spotted at the point where it hit the ground.
 - h. A punt through the end zone and a dropped punt in the end zone are touchbacks. The ball is placed at the designated starting distance from the goal line.

10. Change of Possession

- a. Score
- b. Interception
- c. The offense fails to score or earn another first down. The opposing team gets the ball at the previous line of scrimmage.
- d. The offense punts the ball on fourth down.
- e. Loss of down penalties which occur on fourth down
- f. Fumbles cannot be turned over unless the fumble is caught in mid-air. If the fumbled ball touches the ground, it is dead at that point and the line of scrimmage is moved there.

// Mixed Gender Specific Rules

1. **(7v7 Mixed):** There must be at **MINIMUM** 3 Women on the field per team at all times. There is no maximum limit to the amount of women allowed on the field.

2. The offense must involve a woman player as an “operative player” within three (3) consecutive downs. If two consecutive plays during a possession exclude women, then the following play is “closed” and must include a woman-operative player. The closed play count is reset after each change of possession.
3. On a closed play, if the quarterback is a man then they cannot run for positive yards even if he is rushed. If the quarterback is a man and is sacked on a closed play, the down is lost and the closed play carries over to the next down.
 - a. An Operative Player is defined as a player who:
 - i. Is the intended receiver in the eyes of the official.
 - ii. Runs the ball as the primary runner (an attempt has to be made to cross the line of scrimmage).
 - iii. Receives the snap as the Quarterback and throws the ball forward toward the line of scrimmage (the ball does not have to cross the line of scrimmage).
 - iv. If a woman player is sacked, throws an incomplete pass, loses yards, or does not catch the ball, the down still counts as a closed play.
 - b. An Operative Player is NOT defined as a player who:
 - i. Hands off the football.
 - ii. Snaps the ball into play.
 - iii. Receives a handoff only to give it back to a man before crossing the line of scrimmage.
 - iv. Receives the snap and immediately spikes the ball at her feet in order to stop the clock in the last 2 minutes.
4. Extra points and punts are always “open” plays, and everyone is eligible.

// Flag Football Penalties

Normal rules and penalties of the NCAA apply unless exceptions have been made herein. A half or game cannot end on a defensive penalty.

1. **5-yard penalty, down is replayed**

- a. Delay of game
 - i. 20 seconds after the ball has been spotted
- b. Encroachment
 - i. The offense will receive a free play. They may accept the penalty or take the result of the play.
- c. False start

- d. Holding
- e. Illegal block
 - i. The offensive team may not initiate a pick/block while in motion. If a catch is made after a clear pick, it will be ruled no catch.
- f. Illegal Contact
- g. Illegal motion
- h. Illegal snap
- i. Offsides

2. **5-yard penalty, loss of down**

- a. Illegal forward pass
- b. Flag Guarding
- c. Diving - Loss of down; ball spotted at point of takeoff
 - i. The ball carrier cannot dive into or over a defensive player.

3. **10-yard penalty; down is replayed**

- a. Defensive pass interference [automatic first down]
 - i. If in the end zone, the ball is spotted at the 1-yard line.
- b. Defensive unnecessary roughness [automatic first down]
- c. Offensive unnecessary roughness
 - i. If, during a play, any yardage gained will not stand, the penalty will be marked off from the line of scrimmage.
 - ii. If after a play, the penalty will be marked off at the end of the play.
- d. Unsportsmanlike conduct

4. **10-yard penalty, loss of down**

- a. Offensive pass interference

5. **Additional Penalties**

- a. Failure to use a woman operative - Loss of down; next play is still closed.
- b. Illegal flag pull - 10-yard penalty; Down is replayed
 - i. A player may only deflag an opponent in possession of the ball. If a player removes an opponent's flag belt before they gain possession of the ball, play will continue until the ball carrier is downed by one hand touch.

- c. Intentional grounding - Loss of down; ball spotted at point of infraction (QB's release point).

// Overtime

1. Overtime will only be played during Playoffs. Regular season games can end in Ties.
 - a. Over time will use the Four Downs & Out format.
 - i. If a team does not get a first down within the 4 downs of their possession, a turnover on downs is enforced, and the opposing team takes over at the spot where the ball was last downed.
2. Overtime will begin with rock, paper, and scissors. By the league host.
 - a. The team that wins the coin toss decides if they start on offense or defense (there is no option to decline). Their opponent will decide which endzone to use. Both teams will attempt to score in the same endzone.
3. Each team will have 4 downs to score from ten (10) paces/yards out from the goal line. If a team scores, they can go for one (1) or two (2) extra points. The game will be decided when one team scores more points in the rotation.
 - a. No 1st downs will be awarded except in the case of a penalty.
 - b. MIXED: A woman must be used once within the first three plays or on the 1st and 4th downs when applicable.
 - c. An interception will result in a turnover and may not be returned for any points.
 - d. If the score is still tied after two complete overtime periods, each team must attempt a two-point conversion after they score a touchdown until a winner is decided.

// GOLDEN RULE

First and foremost, all Fray leagues are 50% Social and 50% Sport. While we have staff // officials, we expect individuals to respect the league's culture of fair and fun play. Foul language and rough play will not be tolerated. Individuals who cannot adhere to our standards of fair play and sportsmanship may be asked to leave the league. We want everyone to have fun and be social while enjoying a great sport. We will do whatever we can to make sure all players are having fun!

// SHIRT NOTICE

During week 1 of the season, all players will be given DC Fray reversible jerseys for their team, and we encourage them to wear them during the regular season. Reversible jerseys will be required during playoffs. Any player not wearing the reversible jersey or matching team uniform will not be allowed to play during the playoffs.

// GENERAL POLICIES

Fray is proud to relieve captains of the burden of paying for full teams. We accept individual player payments and allow prepayment for additional players and/or full teams. We are also proud to welcome those who do not have a full team (small groups and free agents) to participate in our league.

Because our mission is to make fun possible, these policies make it easier for people to get involved with and build community through social sports.

All registrations are on a first-come, first-serve basis. Any roster that does not reach our official size (based on each sport) is eligible to receive free agents and/or small groups. Rosters, which is made up of primarily free agents and/or a collection of small groups, may have more players than the standard roster size. This policy is in place to help ensure free agent teams are able to field a team each week consistently.

// Roster Size Chart

Sport	Promotion Size	Official Size	Max Roster Size	Woman Minimum
Flag Football - 5v5	8	10	12	N/A
Flag Football - 7v7	12	14	16	3

// Teams & Substitutions

- 5v5 Leagues:** A maximum of five (5) players can be on the field. Teams must have the required minimum 4 players to start the game
- 7v7 Leagues:** A maximum of seven (7) players can be on the field (Mixed - 3 must be a woman). Teams must have the required minimum 5 players to start the game (Mixed - 2 must be a woman)
- Substitute players (not on the roster) may be used at any time in the regular season. Substitutes are not permitted during playoffs.
 - All substitutes must be registered players on another team and/or in another Fray league currently in play.
 - Teams may use additional substitute players above the player minimum with the opposing team's consent. Teams who agree to play under these conditions must

notify the Host before the start of the game and the outcome of the game will stand as is.

4. If a team substitutes players in and out during the game, they must do so from the same sideline the entire game. Eligible receivers must be on the playing field before the cadence is started.
5. **Substitutes may not be Quarterback!**
6. Teams must designate a captain prior to the start of the game. **They are the only team member allowed to discuss calls with officials.** Judgment calls by an official may not be disputed.
7. **Mercy Rule:** If there is a fifty (50) point difference at the end of the half, the losing team may opt to end the game. If the losing team chooses to continue playing, the score will be recorded as is, and the game will end exactly when time expires, even if time expires in the middle of a play.

// Game Duration

1. Play will be divided into two (2) 20-minute halves.
 - a. The clock will run continuously until the final two (2) minutes of the second half, at which time the clock will stop if:
 - i. An incomplete pass is thrown.
 - ii. A player ends a play by going out of bounds.
 - iii. Either team scores (the clock will remain off until the opposing team snaps the ball after the PAT attempt; the clock does not run during extra points).
 - iv. Change of possession
 - v. A penalty which must be marked off
 - vi. A team calls a time-out
 1. If a team calls a timeout after a touchdown, the clock will not start again until the defensive team takes possession and snaps the ball on offense.
 - b. The clock does not stop for
 - i. a 2-minute warning unless there is a deadball situation causing the clock to stop.
 - ii. First downs
 - iii. Fumbles

- c. If a team is up by 17 points or more, the clock runs continuously during the last two minutes of play.
2. **Flag Leagues:** Teams will have two (2) time-outs per game that may be used at any time. Timeouts stop the game clock.
3. Regular Season Games can end in ties. Playoff games will continue until a winner is decided. Please refer to the OVERTIME section for ties during the playoffs.

// Equipment, Uniforms & Facility Use

1. All equipment will be provided on-site, including flag belts, game balls, and field markers.
2. Players should make every effort to wear the official Fray division shirt.
3. Metal cleats are not permitted
4. Shorts and/or pants with pockets are not permitted.
5. If an individual or team violates the facility's Code of Conduct, they may be asked to leave, and a refund will not be issued.

// Playoffs & Standings

1. Playoffs are determined after the regular season has concluded and are based on scheduling and other league logistics. **Playoffs are not guaranteed.**
2. Standings are automatically sorted in Commish based on the teams' Win-Loss-Tie record. If there is a tie in the standings, we sort based on the following information in order until the tie is resolved:
 - a. Head-to-head matchups
 - b. Score differential
 - c. Points For
 - d. Points Against
 - e. Coin Flip

// Forfeits

1. Teams have until 10 minutes past the designated start time to field the minimum number of players. The 10-minute grace period is considered part of the overall game time. If a team is unable to reach the minimum number of players, the game will be deemed a forfeit.
2. Teams may play a "legal game" with less than the required minimum number of players with the opposing team's consent. Teams who agree to play under these conditions will lose the option of receiving a forfeit win, and the outcome of the game will stand as is. Teams must notify the Host before the start of the game.

- a. **First Forfeit** - Loss of game and warning issued
 - b. **Second Forfeit** - Loss of game, and Fray reserves the right to remove the team from the playoffs.
 - c. **Third Forfeit** - Loss of game and removal from the league with no refund
3. In the case of a forfeit, the final score recorded as 21-0.

// **Weather Cancellations**

1. One week is built into the end of each season
2. All players will be notified via email if games are canceled
3. If more than one weather cancellation occurs, Fray will try to find another week if possible to make up the games, but it is not guaranteed.
4. Should inclement weather or other factors limit normal scheduled game duration and half the game has been played, the game shall count as the full game.
5. Should a game not make it to halftime, the game will be deemed incomplete, rescheduled and started from the beginning.

// Santa Bowl Tournament Rules

KEY RULES

- 7v7, a minimum of 3 women, no maximum amount of women
- Round Robin games **CAN** end in a tie
- Flag Falls on the Ground Without being pulled, 1 hand touch, and the player is down.
- No Blocking
- Two 20 minute halves
- Two time-outs per game, used at anytime
- **Refs will count out loud in order to rush, "1-one thousand, 2-one thousand, 3-one thousand, 4-one thousand - - GO!"**
- During Play Actions, Either The referee must see a "Mesh" point or lose line of sight with the ball to declare an immediate rush for the defense. The referee will yell "GO" and continue the rush count. After the GO call, the defender is free to rush, and the quarterback can run as soon as the rusher crosses the line of scrimmage.
- Each Ref will have a different pace; as long as they are consistent, no standard speed will be asked of them.
- If a team is up 17 points or more, the clock runs continuously during the last two minutes of play.
- Only one foot in bounds with possession (no force out)
- A fumble is not a turnover; the ball is dead at the point of a fumble, and the offense retains possession
- No Flag Guarding
- NO Strips
- 2 Point conversions **ARE** returnable.
- Punts are returnable after **ONE BOUNCE** only.
- Closed plays: the pass needs to be a catchable pass from the QB to the receiver.
- **FEMALE QB**: can use a size 7 football/14 and up. Official size 9 is also permitted.

SEMI-FINALS/FINALS

The **top four teams** will automatically advance to the single-elimination round of the tournament. Seeding will be based on records after the round-robin. In the event of a tie, the following factors (in order) will determine seeding.

1. Head-To-Head Matchup
2. Margin of Victory (total point differential)
3. Points For
4. Points Against
5. Coin Flip