

Flag Football Rule Book



“Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old, he will not depart from it.” Proverbs 22:6

CATHOLIC YOUTH LEAGUE (CYL) CODE OF CONDUCT

The CYL is meant to provide an alternative environment for children to enter athletics without the pressure of having to be No. 1 or “The Best”. CYL emphasizes teamwork and sportsmanship above winning. With that, we ask that all players, parents/guardians, and coaches please read and acknowledge the following information.

COACHES

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 CYL 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 and Christianity, that is consistent with a Catholic School Education.
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 CYL 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 completely 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 Christian tone by exchanging friendly greetings. I will teach the children that both teammates and opponents 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 ensure that I have been FBI fingerprinted through the Diocese of Orlando, and that if I am unable to be present at a game or practice, that at least one other coach/parent volunteer is present.
10. I WILL HAVE FUN!

CATHOLIC YOUTH LEAGUE (CYL) CODE OF CONDUCT

PLAYERS

1. I will treat my teammates, opponents, coaches, parents, and all others involved in CYL 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 try hard and do my best, both in 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. 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.
3. I will support the coach in his/her efforts to teach skills, teamwork, and good sportsmanship to the players. This includes ensuring that your child attends all practices and games.
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, my school, 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 help the team whenever possible by providing my services as requested by the coach or team parent.
8. I WILL HAVE FUN!

CYL FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

INTRODUCTION

All players, coaches, parents, and fans should remember that CYL Flag Football is a Catholic, recreational league, whose main purpose is to develop players, both in life and in sports. A strong emphasis is to be placed by Directors and Coaches on building character, sportsmanship, athleticism, self-discipline, commitment and skill development.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Coaches, players, and parents must adhere to the **Catholic Youth League Code of Conduct**. Coaches will at all times respect the dignity of all players, officials and League Representatives. Coaches will respect the decision/calls of the officials and ask that their team and fans also respect those decisions as well.

Coaches are reminded that they also have responsibility for the actions of their team fans. If the officials judge that the fan's actions to be excessive, they will first ask the coaches to calm down the individuals in question. If the problem continues, they will inform the site Director who will take steps, including removal of disruptive spectators or forfeiture of the game to restore order.

The officials will warn the Coach of any disruptive actions. The second action will result in a 10-yard penalty towards the team. A third action will result in an ejection. Any player, coach or spectator who is ejected **MUST LEAVE** the facility immediately. They will be deemed in violation of the League's Code of Conduct and will be subject to disciplinary action by The League.

Spectators/parents must view the game from the side of the field opposite of the team players along the sideline. For safety, spectators should be at least two yards from the sideline and between the corners of the field. For safety reasons, children not participating but present during games should remain in the presence of, or near that adult that brought them to the field. Coaching from the spectator side is prohibited. However, positive reinforcement of players (i.e. nice play, nice catch) is highly encouraged.

The use of obscenity, profanity or any inappropriate language by a player, coach or spectator is not permitted. Any such actions are deemed to be in violation of the League's Code of Conduct and will be subject to disciplinary action including immediate removal from the facility.

PLAYERS AND ROSTERS

CYL Flag football is not a coed league for grades 3-8. Coed Flag Football is only for grades K-2. Team size information may be found in the table below;

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Players on field</u>	<u>Max on Roster</u>	<u>Min. to Start Game</u>
Boys only: Grade 3 to 8	6	12	5
Coed: Grade K to 2	5	10	4

Divisions will be determined by the CYL Board of Directors, and all players must play within their own division. Exception to team sizes must be approved by the League.

Players may not be borrowed from another team unless that player is needed to field a team with the required minimum size to start a game. The same player may not be borrowed for consecutive games and must be of the same division.

UNIFORM AND EQUIPMENT

- Each team shall wear league issued jersey (shirt for grade k to 2) and shorts. Uniforms may not be altered in any way. If long pants are worn due to adverse weather the pants cannot have pockets
- Mouth guards must be worn by all players and are available for purchase from the league at the fields.
- Sneakers or non-detachable rubber cleat shoes may be worn. Spiked shoes and non-athletic shoes are prohibited.
- Players with a hard cast due to medical reasons are not permitted to participate.
- Flag belts provided by the league must be worn on game day.
- Jerseys/shirts must be tucked into the shorts to keep them from impeding with the flag belts.
- No jewelry of any kind is permitted, expect for medical alert bracelets which must be adhered to the body with tape or other soft device.
- Game balls for grade K to 4 divisions will be "Pee Wee" sized ball. Game balls for grade 5 and above will be "Junior" sized ball.

GAME DURATION AND TIMING

The game shall consist of four 10-minute quarters with a running clock. There shall be a 1-minute break between quarters one and two and between quarters three and four to allow teams to substitute players.

There shall be a halftime intermission of 3 minutes.

During the final two minutes of the second and fourth quarters, a “pro clock” is used, which stops after incomplete passes, going out of bounds, change of possession, and during extra point attempts.

Each team is entitled to two timeouts per half, each of which lasts 30 seconds.

The offense must put the ball in play within 30 seconds of the “ready for play” whistle.

The team that begins on defense in the first half is allowed to choose which goal to defend.

Teams switch directions at the beginning of the second half.

SUBSTITUTIONS (SEE APPENDIX FOR A GAME ROSTER)

Substitutions may only be made at the end of each quarter to ensure a measurable and equitable amount of playing time for each player. Coach should use the game roster located in the appendix to track player play times. All players **MUST** play a minimum of two complete quarters, except in the following circumstances:

1. In cases of extreme exhaustion, injury or other medical condition that restrict play. A player who is bleeding must be removed from the game and cannot re-enter until they are sufficiently bandaged. A substitute may be used while the injured player is being attended. Once the injured player can safely return to the game, they must replace the person who substituted for them.
2. In cases of disruptive behavior, dangerous play, poor sportsmanship, or removal by the referee.
3. In cases where the player has arrived after the second quarter of play was complete.
4. In cases where a team is scheduled to play a doubleheader, the team playing the doubleheader will be allowed to substitute players during their second game only. Substitutions can occur at the 5-minute mark of each quarter of the second game.
5. In cases where the player has disciplinary issues with the team, the coach, the school.

Coaches who fail to follow the playing time rules are in violation of the CYL Code of Conduct and may be subject to disciplinary action.

RULES OF PLAY

Start of Game

Both teams and coaches will meet at mid-field to participate in the league prayer;

Dear Lord,

We thank you for our families, our coaches, our teammates, and our opponents who provide us an opportunity to compete. We thank you for the good health that allows us to play sports. We thank you for our parents, who make time to take us to practice and to our games. Who encourage us to try new things. We ask that you guide us in good sportsmanship so we may begin and end each game as friends. Lord, please watch over us and keep us safe.

In Jesus' Name we pray, Amen

A coin toss determines which team takes possession of the ball. The winner of the toss has the option to begin on offense or defense. The team that begins on offense in the first half will begin on defense in the second half.

Kickoffs

Kickoffs shall be taken from the team's own 12-yard line. On-side kicks are not permitted. Balls that carry into the end zone may be returned. If the receiving team downs the ball in the end, the ball is placed on their own 12 yard line. A muffed ball is considered dead, although a receiving player may pick the ball off the ground in the initial attempt to field the kicked ball.

If a ball is kicked out of bounds, a re-kick will **not** be taken. The receiving team may choose to:

- a) Take possession of the ball on their own 12 yard line or
- b) Take possession of the ball at the spot it went out of bounds.

Scoring

There are no standings and regular season results have no bearing on bracket placement during the St. Sebastian Classic. Bracketing for the Classic is done via a blind draw. Please note that official scores are only kept during the St. Sebastian Classic. The St. Sebastian Classic is conducted during the last few weeks of the season. St. Sebastian is the patron saint of athletes because of his physical endurance and his energetic way of spreading and defending the Faith, hence the Classic is held in his honor.

- Touchdown – 6 points.
- Point after touchdown
 - From the five yard line – 1 point
 - From the twelve yard line – 2 points
- Safety – 2 points. The ball must then be punted or kicked from the 12-yard line by the offensive team.
- Extra point attempt returned to opposing end zone (via intercepted pass or mid-air recovery) – 2 points.

Tie games (only applies to CYL Football Classic)

Each team will have four downs from the opponent's 12-yard line to score. An extra point will be attempted after each score from the 12-yard line and is worth 2 points. Teams will alternate equal numbers of possessions until the score is no longer tied. Each team will be permitted one timeout in overtime. Unused timeouts not used during regulation play do not apply in overtime. Substitutions may only be made at the start of overtime, as it is considered a new quarter.

Regular season games may end in a tie, and no overtime will be played.

Putting the Ball into Play

There will be a center snap between the legs on all plays, including punts, and the ball must be released to the quarterback for a legal play to begin.

The quarterback has a seven-second "pass clock". If the pass is not thrown within seven seconds, play is dead, the down is consumed and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off, the 7-second rule no longer in is in effect.

The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball.

Handoffs to the center are permitted, however a handoff cannot be received between the legs.

Line of Scrimmage

The offensive team must line up with no more than three players in the backfield on each offensive play.

Only one back may be in motion, and a player in motion may not move toward the line of scrimmage until the ball is snapped.

The defender rushing the quarterback must line up at the point determined/marked by the officials 7 yards from the ball/line of scrimmage. Defenders not rushing the quarterback can line up at the line of scrimmage.

Rushers may jump to block a pass attempt, but if there is contact with the passer, an unnecessary roughness penalty may be called. The onus is on the defense to avoid contact.

Downs

Each team will have four downs to advance the ball across the first down marker (mid-field) or into the opposing end zone. After a team crosses the first down marker, it receives four more downs.

De-Flagging

A player is considered down when an opposing player removes his flag belt. The player removing the flag belt shall show it immediately. The ball will be put in play from the point it was at when the flag belt was removed.

If any part of the ball carrier other than hands or feet touch the ground, the ball is considered dead at that point.

If a ball carrier's flag belt falls off without being touched, the ball carrier will be considered down at the spot the flag belt fell off. It is considered tackling if a flag belt is intentionally removed prior to the ball's arrival and the appropriate penalty will be assessed.

Fumbles

The ball shall be considered dead when it hits the ground, and possession of the ball is retained.

If a pitched ball is caught in mid-air without having touched the ground, either team may catch and advance it.

Ball Possession

The ball carrier may not protect his flag in any way in the form of straight-arming, flag guarding with the forearm or ball, running with his head down, dipping his shoulder, or running into a defender purposely. Ball carriers may not jump or dive over a player. Spinning more than 180 degrees is not permitted.

It is the ball carrier's responsibility to avoid colliding with defenders. Contact shall not be penalized provided the ball carrier makes an effort to avoid it. Failure to avoid contact with a defender (charging) will be penalized.

The player with possession of the ball may not be tackled. Tackling is defined as non-incidental contact that results in the ball carrier falling to the ground. The defensive player must make an attempt to remove the player's flags. **If the defensive player that commits this foul is the last player between the ball carrier and the end zone, it will be an automatic first down with the ball placed at the one-yard line.**

Laterals

Backward passes (laterals) are permitted. A backward pass that is dropped is considered a fumble.

There is no limit to the number of laterals that may occur during a given play and they may occur whether behind or beyond the line of scrimmage

Passing / Receiving

All players are eligible to receive passes. No more than one forward pass is allowed on the same play.

For a catch to be considered legal, the receiver must have control of the ball and have one foot in bounds.

When a team is ahead by 20 or more points, they are no longer permitted to attempt a forward pass except in the no run zone. Should the lead revert to less than 20 points, forward passes are once again permitted.

Running

The player who receives the snap (the quarterback) may not run with the ball beyond the line of scrimmage. The quarter back must hand off or pitch to another player to execute a running play. Multiple handoffs and lateral are allowed, but the quarterback still cannot run with the ball beyond the line of scrimmage.

No-Running Zones

There are five yard no running zones on the near side (from the offensive point of view) of first down marker and the end zone. When the line of scrimmage lies within one of the no running zones, no running plays are allowed. This means that the offense must attempt a forward pass beyond the line of scrimmage. Handoffs, pitches, and laterals are allowed, but must lead to a pass attempt.

NOTE: The 5 yard no running zones does not apply to the Grade K to 2 divisions

Blocking

The only type of blocking permitted is screen blocking. All blocking must be made with the blocker in an upright position with both hands clasped in front of or behind their backs or directly at their sides. A blocker must be in a stationary position when impeding a defensive player's progress. Blockers are allowed to take one-step in any direction. If significant contact occurs and the blocker is moving, then it results in a penalty on the blocker. No downfield screen blocking ("moving picks") will be permitted. The blocker must stop and become stationary.

The defensive player may not use any "bump and run" tactics on the receiver. If the defensive player causes any contact, it will be considered pass interference regardless of whether the ball is in the air or not.

Punting

- A team desiring to punt must inform the official and their opponent. There will be no fake or quick kicks.
- There will be no rushing on the punt. Only after the ball is kicked may the players on the line of scrimmage move toward the ball. The team receiving the punt must have at least three players on the line of scrimmage until the ball is punted. The ball may be run back, with blocking following the blocking rules.
- The punting team may down the punted ball if the receiving team makes no effort to gain possession of the ball. Officials will use judgment at the placement of a ball going out of bounds.
- Punts into the end zone may be returned. Fair catches may be made if the player signals for a fair catch.

- A muff or fumble on an attempted catch is a dead ball at the spot where the catch was attempted. The receiving team may pick the ball off the ground in its initial attempt to field the ball.

Player Conduct

Any personal foul, fighting, or unsportsmanlike conduct that is ruled intentional by the official will lead to an **AUTOMATIC ejection of the player(s) and a 10-yard penalty** enforced against his team. No warnings are necessary. The first offense will result in the player(s) being ejected for the remainder of the game and given a one game suspension. The second offense will result in the player being ejected from the league. The officials will report such actions to the League.

No spiking, taunting or excessive celebrations will be allowed. After a score or play, the player must drop the ball or return it to the officials and return to the huddle.

SUMMARY OF PENALTIES

5 Yard Penalties

- Delay of game
- Offensive offside (stoppage of play)
- Defensive offside (stoppage of play)
- Illegal formation (continue play)
- False start/illegal motion (stoppage of play)

10 Yard Penalties (from spot of foul)

- Flag guarding
- Illegal blocking
- Charging, Diving, Jumping, Spinning
- Tackling. If there is no other defensive player between the ball carrier and the end zone, it will be an automatic first down with the ball placed at the one-yard line. Intentionally removing a receiver's flag belt prior to ball arrival is also considered tackling.

10 Yard Penalties (from line of scrimmage)

- Offensive pass interference (plus loss of down)
- Defensive pass interference (plus automatic first down)
- Illegal forward pass
- Offensive / Defensive holding
- Intentional grounding (plus loss of down)
- Illegally secured belt
- Unnecessary Roughness
- Unsportsmanlike Conduct (plus automatic first down)

Rule Highlights

General

- 5 on 5 for grade k to 2
- 6 on 6 for grade 3 to 8
- 10 minute quarters, with 3 minute half time
 - Pro clock during last 2 minutes for 2nd and 4th quarters
 - Running clock the rest of the time
 - 2 timeouts per half per team, 30 second timeouts
- One coach per team permitted on field prior to the snap

Offense

- 4 downs to get to first down (at mid-field), then 4 down to score
- If flag falls off, ball is spotted where it hit the ground
- Spinning more than 180 degrees is not permitted
- No limits to lateral passes
- QB cannot run the ball beyond the line of scrimmage
- QB must release the ball within 7 seconds
- QB passes line of scrimmage, 5 yard penalty repeat the down
- Only one forward pass permitted
- Must run pass play when line of scrimmage starts in no running zone
- Only screen blocking permitted
- Multiple laterals and hand offs allowed, QB cannot run beyond the line of scrimmage
- Center sneak is allowed, but handoff may not be between the legs
- Spiking the ball to stop the clock permitted during the “Pro clock” time

Defense

- Begins 7 yards from line of scrimmage for defenders rushing the quarterback
- If the defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped he cannot rush, if they have not recovered before the snap
- Any number of rushers allowed
- Anyone can rush after the QB releases the ball
- Penalty by the defense on a successful extra point is ignored

APPENDIX

5 STRATEGIES TO GIVE EQUAL PLAYING TIME IN SPORT - PLAY LIKE A CHAMPION TODAY™

As a coach, playing time can be your biggest headache. It can be difficult to give each player fair playing time. However, the opportunity to participate in sports with meaningful playing time is essential to childhood development, confidence-building and overall athlete development. PLC believes strongly in the distribution of equal playing time in youth sports. We recommend at a minimum for 6th grade and below as close to equal playing time as possible and for 7th and 8th grade at least 25% playing time for all participants.

So how do you do that? Here are 5 strategies taken from the Play Like A Champion Today™ youth sport coaches manual:

1. **Communicate with your players and their parents.** Let your players and parents know your commitment to fair playing time and what they can expect throughout the season. Make sure your playing time commitments are explained to the parents at a pre-season meeting. The better you communicate up front, the less push back you will receive during the season.
2. **Plan ahead.** Prepare a detailed substitution pattern before each game. Set your line-ups to have the best chance to be competitive in each quarter, half, or inning. Don't "stack" certain line-ups to try to win – players pick up on this and might think of themselves as the "B Team." Make everyone feel like they are on the "A Team" and you will get the most out of every player.
3. **Stick to your playing time commitments,** regardless of the game situation. Is sacrificing a player's opportunity to have fun and feel accepted by his/her coach and team worth improving your record? You decide.
4. **If possible, have an assistant keep track of playing time;** this could be an assistant coach or a trusted parent. Recruiting some help will allow you to focus on game strategy and instruction of your players during the game.
5. **Take advantage of lopsided opportunities and give more time to your less-used players** (especially when equal playing time is not guaranteed). Don't wait for the other coach to do this. If he/she wants to play their stars the whole game then that is their problem. Also, make sure this isn't your only playing time strategy.

GAME DAY LINE UP SHEET CATHOLIC YOUTH LEAGUE

SCHOOL _____

COACH _____

GRADE _____

DATE _____

# of players	PLAYER NAME	QUARTERS PLAYED				COMMENTS
		1	2	3	4	
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						

All players should play a minimum of half the game