

# 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**

# 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, and skill development.

## CODE OF CONDUCT

Coaches, players, and parents will adhere to the CYL Code of Conduct (page 9-10). Coaches will at all times respect the dignity of all players, officials and League Representatives. Coaches will respect the decision/calls of the referees 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's fans. If the officials judge the fans 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 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. 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.

## PLAYERS AND TEAMS

Please note that CYL Flag Football is not a coed league for grade 3-8. Coed Flag Football is only offered for grade K-2. Team size information may be found in the table below.

	<u>Players on Field</u>	<u>Max. on Team</u>	<u>Min. to Start Game</u>
Boys: Grades 3-6	8	16	6
Coed: Grades K-2	5	10	4

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

If a school has multiple teams in a division, a player may not be borrowed 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.

## **SUBSTITUTIONS**

Substitutions may only be made at the end of each quarter to ensure a measurable and equitable amount of playing time for each player. 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.
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 6-minute mark of each quarter of the second game or as indicated by numbers 1-3 above.

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

## **PLAYING FIELD AND EQUIPMENT**

The playing field will be of an appropriate size to fit the venue. All fields will be of the same dimensions for their division.

The K through 4<sup>th</sup> grade divisions will use a “Peewee” sized ball. All others will use a “Junior” sized ball.

Uniform/equipment requirements are as follows:

- Each team shall wear league issued jerseys and shorts. Jerseys may not be altered in any way. Long pants (without pockets) may be worn during adverse/cold weather conditions.
- Mouth guards are mandatory.
- Either sneakers or non-detachable rubber cleated shoes may be worn. Spiked shoes and non-athletic shoes are not permitted.
- No special protective devices such as helmets, pads, etc. are allowed. Padding may be used to only protect existing injuries, and then only with the approval of the game officials.
- Game day flag belts will be provided by the league. Players must wear a set of approved flags on their hips, with their jersey tucked into their shorts.
- No jewelry of any kind is permitted, except for medical alert bracelets.

## COACHES

One coach per team shall be allowed on the playing field with the players in the K through 4<sup>th</sup> grade divisions. In all other divisions, a coach may enter the field of play and speak with one player prior to the snap. The coach must return to the sideline prior to the ball being put into play. Only those coaches who have been FBI fingerprinted through the Diocese of Orlando will be allowed on the sidelines/field of play.

## GAME DURATION AND TIMING

The game shall consist of four 12-minute quarters with a running clock. There shall be a 2-minute break between quarters one and two and another 2-minute break between quarters three and four. There shall be a halftime intermission of 5 minutes. Should the heat index on game day reach 85 degrees or higher, a 30 second water break will be permitted midway through each quarter, and breaks between quarters will be reduced to 1 minute

During the final two minutes of the second and fourth quarters, a “pro clock” is used; the clock will be stopped for out of bounds, incomplete passes, change of possession, or an extra point attempt.

Each team will be allowed one-60 second timeout per half. The clock will be stopped during all time outs.

The offense must put the ball in play within 25 seconds of the “ready for play” signal.

The officials can hold a game up for injuries, equipment repair, or in cases where the ball cannot be put into play in a reasonable amount of time.

## RULES OF PLAY

### Start of Game

The team winning the coin toss shall have the choice of ball possession in the first or second half. The other team will choose which end zone will be defended. The team that begins the game on offense will begin on defense in the second half. Teams will automatically switch ends/directions to begin the second half.

### Kickoffs

Kickoffs shall be taken from the team’s own 15-yard line. On-side kicks are not permitted. Balls that carry into the end zone may be returned. A muffed ball is considered dead, although a receiving player may pick the ball off the ground in the initial attempt to field the 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 15 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. 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 name.

- Touchdown – 6 points.
- Point after touchdown
  - From the three yard line – 1 point
  - From the ten yard line – 2 points
- Safety – 2 points. The ball must then be punted or kicked from the 15-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 St. Sebastian Classic)

Each team will have four downs from the opponent's 15-yard line to score. An extra point will be attempted after each score. Teams will alternate equal numbers of possessions until the score is no longer tied. Each team will be permitted one timeout. 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.

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 defensive line must line up at the point determined/marked by the officials (5 yards from the ball). If the ball is less than 5 yards from the first down/goal line, the defensive line will be marked at the first down/goal line.

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

Four downs shall be allowed in which to advance the ball into the next zone for a first down.

A team beginning in a zone and subsequently losing yardage back into another zone must advance the ball to the zone forward of the one in which the ball was originally put into play in order to receive a first down.

### 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, including point after touchdown attempts. Should the lead revert to less than 20 points, forward passes are once again permitted.

### 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 four 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)

## 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!

## 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!

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