



SOMA Sports & Social **Flag Football Tournament Rules**

SOMA Sport and Social encourages and welcomes any and all participants to our events regardless of gender, identity, race, and/or sexuality as we look to create a competitive and inclusive experience

WAIVER

- Every participant must sign game day waivers prior to participation. It is the responsibility of the head coach/team captain to provide these signatures to the event coordinators.

COVID-19 PROTOCOLS

- All players are required to wear masks at all times (while playing, on the sidelines and walking to and from the field).
- Masks may only be removed briefly when eating or drinking.
- Players will also maintain at least 6 ft. of distance between one another when on the sideline and/or not on the field of play.
- Failure to adhere to these measures could result in a player/team's removal from the tournament and forfeiture of games.
- Hand sanitizer and other disinfecting products will be available for use by the players.
- Spectators will be permitted, but will need to abide by all COVID-19 protocols (wearing masks at all times and maintaining a proper social distance)

TEAM CAPTAINS/REFEREES

- The team captains/referees are responsible for making players aware of rules and regulations prior to participation in any game, or at any time during the game.
- Captains are the only people allowed to respectfully discuss plays or other questions with Referees.
- For safety issues, teams will not be allowed on the field prior to their respective games until about 10 minutes before their scheduled start times. Most teams will have less than 10 minutes before the start of their games to warm up.

TEAMS

- Teams consist of 6 players. Rosters may include up to 15 players per team.
- A team must have at least 4 players present to start a game. If team captains agree prior to the game, teams can choose to play 4 on 4, 4 on 5, 5-5, or 5-6.
- Players may only be on one team roster.
- All gender identities are welcome to play. There will, however, be no rules specifying the on-field make-up of players on the basis of gender or gender identity.



EQUIPMENT

- Flags must be worn at the waist with one flag on each side of the player's hip "flaring out". No article of clothing may cover any part of a player's belt. Shirts must be tucked in or pulled under the belt so the entire flag from post to flag is accessible. Referee has to see your post (flag attaches to sonic pop).
- NFL size game balls will be used.
- Games will be played on turf. Players may wear athletic shoes with plastic or rubber cleats. **Metal cleats are prohibited.**

TIME

- Games will be 45 minutes in length. Two 20-minute running halves with a 5-minute half-time break. Clock stops on injuries or at the ref's discretion.
- There will be one time out (TO) allowed per team per half.
 - (TO) will be a 25 second play clock TO, so get back in the huddle and get your play off before the play clock expires.
- Play clock will be 25 second (ref(s) will give a 10 sec warning with a 5,4,3,2,1 countdown).
- In the last one minute of any game, penalties, change of possessions and scores will stop the clock and will start on the ready for play.
 - Example: Declared Punt- team declaring punt wants to take the full 25 secs for play clock, stop clock after 25 second run off, and move ball to other team's 10 yd. line and clock will start on the ready for play whistle.

RULES AND REGULATIONS:

- Games begin with a coin toss.
- Winner will choose to either receive the ball or defend a goal. If a team is >10 minutes late to report to the field, the game is forfeited. If late to report, coin toss is automatically deferred to the on-time team.
- All activities/playing/warming up with balls will cease once the conference for the coin toss is announced.
- Teams will switch sides, two 20 minute quarters, team in possession maintains ball only switch sides.
- To start the game and after each score (including a safety), the ball is placed at the offensive team's 10-yard line. There are no Kickoffs or Punts. If Offense declares a punt on 4th down, the ball will be placed at the other team's 10 yd. line.
- QB/Ball Carrier is not allowed to run from the 5-yd. line and in on any play started at or inside the 5-yd. line.



- Example: A one (1) pt. extra pt. or any extra point that is snapped from the 5-yd. line and in, there is no running allowed, QB/Passer must scramble, defense can rush or blitz if they have a blitz available on a regular play and can only rush on an extra point. Ball must be a forward pass over the LOS to run into the endzone. (Penalty: will be 5 yards RTD if accepted by defense). So quick hitches or forward screen plays behind the LOS are illegal, pass must be forward and over the LOS.

SCORING

- Based on National Federation of State High School Association rules, unless otherwise specified.
- In Round Robin, all extra points will be attempted even if an extra point is not necessary to win the game. For example: if A scores and is winning 13-12, and no time left on clock, extra pt. will be attempted.
- Touchdowns are worth 6 points.
- Extra Pts: 1 pt. from 5 yd. line and 2 pts. from 10 yd. line. Ball is Live and Defense can return for points attempted. No blitzing on extra pts. The QB will not be allowed to run from the Five (5) yard line and in and must throw a forward pass over the LOS.

FIRST DOWNS/SERIES

- There will be one first down at mid-field (marked by double cones).
- Offense has 4 downs to reach a first down and another 4 to score once past (unless a penalty gives the team a new set of downs OR repeat the down (RTD) type penalties are enforced).
- If there is a turnover prior to reaching a first down, the team causing the turnover will only have 4 downs to score.

COUNT

- A medium/slow 4 count (1,2,3,4) called by referee @ LOS. After count, defense can rush QB (See Blitz).

BLITZ

- Defense gets 1 blitz per set of 4 downs. If Defense comes across LOS before the count or a hand off, then it is counted as their blitz. There's no limit to the # of rushers/blitzers. The status of the blitz will be determined by if defense has broken LOS at time the ball is declared dead (usually blitz is counted with a bad or dropped snap). If the ball is dropped or snapped over the QB's head, the ball is dead at that spot on the ground or furthest away from LOS/goal line. If there is a replay of a down on a blitz play, defense is given their blitz back. Blitzing after the blitz was used, it will be encroachment, live ball foul.



LINE OF SCRIMMAGE (LOS) /OFFENSIVE LINEMAN

- All players, including the center are eligible receivers.
- One offensive player is allowed to be in motion behind the LOS, after all players are set for one second. All other offensive players must remain stationary in position before the ball is snapped. Motion is defined as being in the backfield, parallel to the LOS or going away from LOS (not Arena Football Style). Motion going forward toward LOS is illegal live ball foul.

HIKING THE BALL

- Ball must be hiked from the ground. Side -Saddle snaps are allowed and must be snapped to a “back” in the back field. No self-snaps are allowed (5 yds. illegal snap). Dropped snaps are dead (See bullet below).
- Snap can be fielded cleanly off the ground, doesn’t matter if it bounces “10 times”, as long as QB doesn’t drop it, traps are good, balls snapped sideways, where QB has to move sideways outside the tackle box area, or ball is snapped over QB’s head, play is dead automatically, ball will be placed at spot it first hits the ground or furthest from defense’s goal line (i.e., forward fumbles will be spotted where touched).

TURNOVERS

- Interceptions – a ball that is intercepted by the defense may be returned for a score
- Fumbles, if a player fumbles the ball and it hits the ground, the play is dead and the team who possessed the ball last will retain possession at the point of fumble or where the ball hits the ground, whichever is the furthest from their opponent’s goal line. The only fumble recovery is if the ball carrier loses the ball and opponent recovers it before it hits the ground, play is then still live and opponent can advance/return recovery for a score (live ball).

BLOCKING

- Off/Def. blocking, BOTH must be open-handed and thrust outward from chest, with open hands, and not “loaded up” from the side. There is no blocking below the waist or above the shoulders. No chop-blocks. Players cannot leave their feet to block. Blocking must be controlled, do not run a player over, blocking or running the ball (UNR) if it looks rough it is a penalty. No bull rushing by any player (Players cannot take a running start @ another, barreling over, UNR (auto 1st/LOD -15 yards).

STIFF ARMS and FLAG GUARDING

- Stiff arms are not allowed by Runner. This will be an illegal contact foul and 10-yd penalty will be assessed and down will count, as this is considered a “spot foul not end-of-the-run” foul.



- Flag guarding is a form of Stiff Arming.
- Excessive/flagrant contact/acts to the neck or face or head will be a 15 yd. UNR w/ auto 1st or loss of down and could lead to an ejection from game, a second such incident by the same player in the same game or in another game could result in the player being barred from the remainder of the tournament. Such ejections will be reported to head officials which will be noted to next officials covering said player's next game and warning will be conveyed to the captain of the team as well as the offending player. Anyone who engages in such acts/conduct will severely impact their team as well as their chances for resuming play in game and tournament.

RECEIVER

- Must have 1 foot in bounds to make a reception. A receiver can't step out of bounds, on his own and come back onto the field and touch the ball. The player can return to block or "tackle" the ball carrier. Due to Small end zones, minimal O/B will be ignored by receivers, but discretion must be used, if a player runs O/B 3 yards and jumps back into the field of play it will be deemed illegal participation.
- No De-flagging a receiver before the ball arrives or busting up a play "with force" other than knocking pass out of receiver's hands or pulling flag, play the ball. Note: Stripping a "ball carrier" is illegal but not a receiver on a pass.

FORWARD PASS

- There is only one forward pass allowed per play. There are unlimited backward or lateral passes. Once a ball carrier crosses the LOS, he/she may not lateral back to someone behind the LOS and have that person throw a forward pass, nor can a ball carrier step over the LOS and then go back behind it and pass.

BALL CARRIER

- The "spot" of the ball is always the torso of the ball carrier at the time of flag removal or the flag falling to the ground (ball is dead at the spot).
- The defense can't push a ball carrier out of bounds(OB). The defense can't use contact to break up a pass play (UNR-15 yards). You can't hold the jersey to pull the flag or tackle a ball carrier. You can't "stand up" a ball carrier to pull the flag. This is considered holding -10-yard penalty and repeats the down. However, wearing baggy shorts if momentarily grabbed near the flags doesn't automatically constitute holding. Suggestion: Wear football pants, tighter shorts or leggings to avoid this contact.
- If the ball carrier's flag inadvertently falls off during a play, the play is dead at the spot of possession or where the flag falls off when they have possession. If any other player starts a play without both flags and subsequently becomes a ball carrier/receiver, the play ends at the spot of possession. QB receives a snap without both flags, dead at snap.



- Ball carrier is Down by Contact (NFHS rule) if anything besides feet, hands or ball hit the ground, without a flag pull or contact by the opponent being required. Hips are the spot of the ball.

REMOVING THE FLAG

- A player is considered tackled when at least one flag is removed from the ball carrier's belt.
- No chucking is allowed (no contact on receivers by defense on passing plays). If receiver blocks on a passing play, Offensive Pass Interference, if illegal contact by defense 10 yards and repeat the down.
- Tackling is strictly prohibited (UNR – auto first and warning).
- A defensive player may not pull the receiver's flag before the ball is caught; the play is dead at the spot of a one hand touch. This will result in a 10yd penalty tacked onto the end of the run and repeat the down.
- A defensive player may not grab and hold the offensive player to pull the flag. If deemed that hold restricted player and no other defensive player is between him and goal line, Referee may award a TD (discretion).

OVERTIME

- Round Robin games with a tie. One play will be made to determine the Winner. Team that called the coin toss to start the game gets to call the toss for OT. Choices will be: Offense or Defend a Goal. Ball is placed at the 5-yard line. No blitzing. If you score you win, if you choose defense and you stop the offense you win. Winning team is awarded one point added to their score.
- In PLAYOFF Rounds – Team that called the coin toss to start the game gets to call the toss for OT. Choices will be Offense or Defend a goal. Each team starts from the 20-yard line. If one team scores they go for the extra point (1 or 2pts). The next team has the same opportunity to get a score with the extra point. If both teams score the exact points, they will go again and the loser of the toss gets a choice. If neither team scores in a specific series the team that comes closest to the goal line wins. If they both end in the same place or both turn the ball over we will go again. If we play a third series or more, each must go for two on the extra point. Note: if team A doesn't score and gets to the 5-yard line, team B must get the ball inside the 5-yd. line. Once they score or get the ball inside the 5-yd. line, the game will be over, B doesn't need to play out their additional downs. If team B intercepts and doesn't return the ball for a TD, on B's possession, they have to get the ball inside the 20-yard line (except if we have a penalty) and they win, Team A's gains are nullified with any turnover (if both teams turnover the ball, we will play another series).

PENALTIES



- 5-yard penalties: (Repeat the Down – RTD)
 - False Start
 - Encroachment
 - Illegal 2nd blitz - Live ball
 - Substitution
 - Illegal motion or shift
 - Delay of game
 - Illegal snap. Repeat the Down
 - Illegal Plays: running ball from the 5-yard line and in (extra points from 5 yds. and in)
- 10-yard penalties:
 - Illegal contact (chuck/hold/flag guard)
 - Illegal participation/touching
 - Off. Holding
 - Def. flagging/early flag removal (from end of run and RTD)
 - Ball stripping (spot of strip and RTD)
 - Hold of runner (from end of run and RTD)
 - Tackle (pull down) of runner (end of run and RTD) - Note: if in the judgment of the referee, a TD was prevented, the ref can award a TD if there is no other defender in the area between ball carrier and goal line or is the proximity of the GL. Baggy shorts being grabbed doesn't automatically result in holding, use discretion (unless they grab and hold up runner or grab shirt up high away from Belt).
- 15-yard penalties:
 - Illegal blocks
 - Illegally tied flag belt
 - Unsportsmanlike conduct
- 15-yard penalties resulting in automatic first down (Auto 1st) or loss of down (LOD):
 - Personal fouls/UNR of any kind, i.e., barreling a player over, rough tackle/flag pull, pushing ball carrier out of bounds not going for flag, contacting potential receiver (breaking up pass), fighting of any kind whether there is contact or not (possible ejection from tournament).
 - Roughing the passer (15 yds. tacked onto the end of play or from previous spot if incomplete)
 - Defensive Pass Interference - spot foul, auto 1st / or if in end zone ball placed at one-yard line auto 1st.
 - Offensive pass interference - previous spot and LOD.
 - Charging/lowering of head and/or shoulders by runner (spot minus 15 yds. and LOD).
 - Flagrant contact to neck or face or head (Spot foul automatic 1st/LOD)



- Note: All defensive penalties on a scoring play will be assessed on the extra point.
- **Conduct/Contact with Officials will not be tolerated** (See Conduct).

DEFINITION OF ROUGHING THE PASSER

- Defined as making avoidable contact while passer is in the “act of throwing a forward pass”; any contact made with passer’s throwing hand, arm, shoulders and above including an attempt to block the pass, make a tackle; any physical contact made to the passer including pushing, shoving, lowering of the shoulder/head to knock the passer over while attempting to make the flag pull, whether the ball is touched or not. If defense is blocked into QB then no foul may be call by discretion of the Ref.

CONDUCT

- There will be absolutely zero tolerance for unsportsmanlike (UNS) conduct. Anyone who engages in UNS conduct will severely impact his/her team and his/her chances for resuming play. If a player receives two UNS penalties, they will be ejected for the rest of the game and possibly the next game(s) as well. A player who attempts to throw a punch, kick, or knees an opponent will be ejected for the rest of the tournament. If a player is ejected from the game, he/she has one minute to completely leave the field. If the player does not comply, the referee can declare a forfeit and the other team will be awarded the victory. If a team comes off its sideline onto the field or to the other sideline during an altercation, the game could be a forfeit victory being awarded to the other team. Cursing at a ref will result in immediate ejection from the game. Captains are only ones allowed to respectfully discuss plays and other questions permitted within reason w/ Referees.