



League Rules / Divisions A, B & C

The City of San Clemente utilizes staff to referee all flag football games. The officials are trained to maintain player safety, enforce rules, sportsmanship and conduct policies to the best of their ability. Questions/Discussions about rules can be had during the next dead ball, so as not impede the pace of play (i.e. timeouts, half-time).

Game Format

- Field is approx.
 - Division C: 40 yards long and 40 yards wide, not including two 10 yard end zones.
 - Division B: 50 yards long and 40 yards wide, not including two 10 yard end zones.
 - Division A: 60 yards long and 40 yards wide, not including two 10 yard end zones.
- Games are 6 on 6
- Teams of 8-10 players
- Four 12-minute running clock quarters (1 minute break between quarters, 2-minute break at half)
- Two 30-second timeouts per half
 - The clock will only stop for time-outs and injuries (it does not stop for incomplete passes, out of bounds, change of possession)
 - The clock will stop in the final 2 minutes of the game if there is a defensive penalty, incomplete pass, out of bounds, turnover on downs, change of possession and a touchdown. Clock will start on snap of ball.
 - Clock will not run on extra point attempts.
- **Overtime (only in the playoffs):** if the score is tied, an overtime period will take place with each team receiving a possession.
 - Coin flip determines choice of 1st or 2nd possession. The other team will choose the side of the field they start on.
 - Possession begins at the 10 yard line from the end zone (both teams will go in the same direction)
 - When a touchdown is scored, a team can elect to go for a 1- or 2-point conversion.
 - If an interception occurs, the team intercepting the ball can return it for a score. If it does not result in a score the ball will be placed at the 10 yard line for their overtime possession.
 - If the game is still tied, overtime will be repeated until there is a winner.
 - Teams alternate first possession each overtime period (Ex. Team A gets 1st possession in first overtime, then Team B get first possession in the second overtime if score remains tied after each overtime)

Coin Toss:

- The game will begin with a coin toss to determine possession. Visiting team calls the coin in the air. Winners of the coin toss will select if they want possession and when. The other team of the coin toss get to select side.

- No team will be allowed to start both halves with possession.

Uniforms:

- Coaches will be given jerseys and shorts by the City of San Clemente. The official jerseys must be worn during play unless otherwise discussed and approved.
- Cleats are allowed, no metal spikes and/or removable spikes are allowed. Inspections will be at the official's discretion.
- Only shorts without pockets, belt loops, belts and exposed drawstrings are allowed
- No hats/beanies, and no jewelry are allowed. Players will be given one warning and failure to comply may result in ejection from the game. Hoodies are allowed but must be tucked in.
- Jerseys **MUST** be tucked into shorts prior to game start. Officials/staff will remind players.
- Mouth guards are not required.

Play:

- Each possession to begin a half, after a score, or after a turnover on downs starts at the 5 yard line.
- 35 second play clock, from when the ball is spotted by the official.
- The offensive team has three plays to get a first down, then three plays to score once they have crossed mid-field.
- Interceptions can be returned, and possession will begin where the defender is flagged.
- The first offensive player that has possession of the football after the snap is designated as the QB. **NO RUSHING QB**
- QB must throw the ball within the time, when the QB has possession of the ball.
 - 3rd / 4th grade – 5 seconds (Division C)
 - 5th / 8th grade – 4 seconds (Divisions A & B)
 - If the QB does not release the ball before time expires, it is a sack, loss of down and with the ball being placed 5 yards back from the previous spot.
 - Once the QB has released the ball by handing, pitch or throwing a lateral/pass behind the line of scrimmage, the pass clock is no longer in effect for any player who receives the ball.
- Shovel passes are allowed, except within 5 yards of the goal line.
- Multiple passes are allowed only if the first pass is behind the line of scrimmage. Pass clock does not apply. Defense may rush.
- Defensive players must be 1 yard off the line of scrimmage and cannot cross the line of scrimmage until the QB has released the ball by handing, pitch or throws a lateral/pass behind the line of scrimmage
- Defense may rush when the ball is no longer in the quarterback's (first player to receive snap) possession
- There are no run plays within five yards of the goal line.
- One first down at midfield
- Ball is marked where the feet of the player are not from where the ball is.
- The snapped ball must pass between the center's legs or side toss.
- Center cannot take a direct handoff from the QB, pitch is allowed.
- Once the ball crosses the line of scrimmage there will not be any other passes allowed.
- All players are eligible
- No leaping or diving to advance the ball. Jump cuts, spins are allowed. (Officials discretion)
- A receiver must have **one** foot in bounds when making a reception.
- Only one player can be in motion when the ball is snapped.
- **Absolutely NO TACKLING or BLOCKING.** Player will be given one warning, after it is grounds for ejection.
- A fumbled ball can be caught by the defensive team and can be returned, but is dead if it hits the ground and the offense retains possession. No stripping the ball by the defense. Any fumble caused from contact with a defensive player is dead at the spot. Any forward fumble that is caught in the air by an offensive player other than the player who fumbled will be brought back to the spot of the fumble.
- Screens are **NOT** allowed. Officials will use their discretion. If deemed a screen, ball is dead at the spot. Next play will begin where marked.

- The ball is dead when it hits the ground, the offensive player's flag is pulled from their belt, the ball-carrier steps out of bounds, or the ball-carrier's body (outside of their hands or feet) touches the ground
- If a player loses his flag when in possession of the ball, the play is dead at the spot of the ball.

- Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, if the clock runs out then there will be one untimed down.
- If the offense commits a penalty on the games' final possession/play the game is over.
- Coaches are **NOT** permitted on the field in the 7th and 8th grade divisions. One warning will be given. Failure to adhere is grounds for ejections
- Only 1 coach for 3rd – 6th grade divisions for offense and defense.
- A team may run the ball as much as they want during their possession. No direct QB runs.
- Laterals and pitches are only allowed behind the line of scrimmage.

Minimum Play Rule: Every participant must play 5 minutes consecutively during each quarter. Scorekeepers will be keeping track of when players are on the field. Coaches and players must check in at the scorekeepers table 10-15 minutes prior to game time.

Scoring:

- Touchdowns = 6 points
- Extra Point (5-yard line) = 1 pt. Must be a pass.
- Extra Point (10-yard line) = 2 pt. Pass or Run
- Any extra point can be returned by the defense on a turnover for the point value of the was attempted.

Mercy Rules:

- If a team is in front by 24 or more points, they cannot advance an interception. The team will take over possession at their own 5-yard line.
- If a team is up by 24 or more, they only have 2 downs to get a first down, 2 downs to score.
- If a team is down by 24 points, they will receive 4 downs to gain a first down and 4 downs to score.
- If a team is down 30 points or more will take their next possession at the opponent's 20-yard line and have 4 downs to score.
- Any team up by 40 or more points will not receive an offensive possession. The losing team will retain possession and will continue to reset the ball back at the 20-yard line should they not gain a first down.

Defensive Penalties:

- Defensive Pass Interference - 10 yard penalty and down over (LOS).
- Too many players on the field- 5yard penalty and repeat the down.
- Illegal Contact-outside 3 yards of the line of scrimmage (holding, jams, etc.) – 5 yard penalty and repeat the down (LOS).
- Illegal Flag Pull (before player has ball) – 5 yard penalty and replay the down (SPOT).
- Off-sides – 5 yard penalty and replay the down (LOS).
- Illegal Rushing (before a hand-off has occurred) – 5 yard penalty and repeat the down.
- Tackling – 10 yard penalty and down over(SPOT), pushing is considered tackling/holding.
- Tackle From Behind w/clear path to end zone (If the last defender commits the penalty) – Automatic Touchdown.
- Roughing the passer- 10 yard penalty, repeat the down.
- Unsportsmanlike conduct – 10 yard penalty and automatic 1st down (**possible ejection - automatic ejection for 2nd unsportsmanlike**)
 - Unsportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated (Rough play, verbal abuse, trash talking, etc. is cause for an ejection)

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- If an unsportsmanlike tackle occurs when a runner has a “clear-path” to the end zone, the offensive team will be rewarded with a touchdown
- Any ejection will cause players to miss next game. The second ejection is grounds for expulsion from the league.

Offensive Penalties:

(LOS) = Line of Scrimmage

- Offensive Pass Interference – 10 yard penalty and loss of down. (LOS)
- Blocking, Screens, or Holding- 10 yard penalty and repeat the down. (LOS)
- Illegal motion (2 or more players in motion when the ball is snapped) – 5 yard penalty and repeat the down (LOS)
- False Start – 5 yard penalty, replay the down (LOS)
- Illegal Forward Pass – 5 yard penalty and loss of down (LOS)
- Leaping – ball is dead at the spot
- Flag Guarding (including stiff arms) – ball is dead at spot
- Unsportsmanlike conduct – 10 yard penalty (possible ejection - automatic ejection for 2nd unsportsmanlike)
 - Unsportsmanlike conduct by coaches, players and parents will not be tolerated (Rough play, verbal abuse, trash talking, etc. is cause for an ejection) The person will be warned and the second warning will result in an ejection.
- Delay of Game – 5 yard penalty (LOS)
- There is no intentional grounding penalty

League rules may be changed at any time if problems arise due to concerns with safety conditions, sportsmanship, or competitive balance.

Parents and players must be at least 10 ft away from the sidelines for safety and just in case players need to run out of bounds. Referees and down marker staff must be able to have access up and down the field.

Coaches, players and parents need to pick up their equipment and trash at the end of their game.