



Tucson Youth Football Flag Rules & Procedures





Tucson Youth Football Flag Rules & Procedures 2023

TYFSF FLAG PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

Although the following are the TYFSF Flag Rules and Regulations, it is necessary and required that all flag Head Coaches, Assistant Coaches and other team personnel acquaint and conduct themselves in accordance with the “Coaches Code of Conduct” and other related rules and regulations as set forth in the Tucson Youth Football & Spirit,” rule and others as required by the Federation and/or associations. In addition to the general regulations found in the above sections, the following flag rules govern all participants playing in TYFSF.

ORGANIZATION:

The Federation is the basic unit of organization which consists of a minimum of four (4) teams in same age division.

DIVISION OF PLAY

League age cut-off date is July 31 of the current year and shall be the participant’s league age for the coming season. There are no height or weight restrictions on players.

Division Name	Flag
Age	5,6,7

Cheerleaders shall follow the overall age and division of play referenced above. In addition, all flag spirit squads must follow TYFSF Spirit Guidelines as outlined in the spirit section of this rulebook.

Ages shall be verified by methods outlined in the TYFSF Administration Manuel.

A player is ineligible if he is a member of a school tackle program or if he is playing TYFSF Tackle football. He is also ineligible if he is competing in another flag football program (unless as part of school curriculum).

A player shall furnish written consent to play (provided by TYFSF) from either parent or legal guardian.

A signed statement from an examining physician that the candidate is physically fit and there are no observable conditions which would contra-indicate from him/her playing football or cheering. NOTE: If regular school medical examination results are releasable to parents, a copy such report, if not older than January 1st of the current year, may be used in lieu of new examination.

FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

RULE 1: PLAYERS

1. A game is played between two (2) teams consisting of eight (8) players each.
2. Each team roster shall have a maximum of 24 players, and minimum of 12 players. A forfeit will result when the minimum is not met.
3. Only players appearing on the official team roster form supplied by the Federation are to be counted as players. The Roster is completed before the first game of the season and verified by the Federation in a process called “certification”.

MANDATORY PLAY RULE FLAG FOOTBALL

Regardless of team size ALL PLAYERS MUST PLAY A MINIMUM OF 8 PLAYS. The 8 plays must be completed by the 11 minutes mark of the 2nd half. Any player still needing plays must go in and stay in until all plays are completed.

NOTE: Teams will complete and follow the Mandatory Play Form. Failure to abide by this rule will result in forfeiture of that game.

RULE 2: PLAYING FIELDS

1. The field shall be rectangular with lines and zones and shall conform to either of the two designs mentioned below:
 - A. 100-yard field. This field measures one hundred and twenty (120) yards in length, divided into 5 zones.
 - B. 80-yard field. This field measures eight (80) yards in length, divided into 4 zones of 15 yards and two 10-yard end zones.
 - C. Goal posts are unnecessary as points after TD (conversion) are made only passing or running.
 - D. A conversion line will be marked 3 yards from the goal line and at an equal distance from each sideline.
2. The following field equipment will be used.
 - A. Down Marker will be used to indicate the number of the down.
 - B. A Zone Marker will be used to indicate the distance to go for a first down (placed at the forward zone line).
 - C. Corner Flags with flexible staffs will be placed at the four (4) sections of the end zones and the sidelines, soft pylons may be used if flags are unavailable.

RULE 3: EQUIPMENT

1. Game Ball: The Federation will use the Pee wee Size Ball.

2. Flags

- A. Each player must wear a belt with the number of flags designated as “standard” by the Federation, from the game uniform. For TYFSF standard shall be defined as the Flag-a-tag Sonic Boom belts. Any color is allowed if it is not the same color as the shorts.



- B. The flags will be attached to a belt and extend or hang from each side of the player's body.
- C. When using three (3) flags, the third will hang from the rear of the player's body.
- D. Flags will be 14-20 inches long from the bottom of the plastic holder and a minimum of 1 3/8 inches wide. The belt must be tight to prevent being turned around during a de-flagging.
- E. belt may not hang more than 6" or must be tucked in.
- F. The securing of flags to the body, waist, or belt, other than that provided, is illegal. The flag holders may not be modified in any way.
- G. Jersey cannot be worn over flags
- H. Players with "NO" flags or with one flag can receive ball, but play will be whistled dead at spot received or controlled.
- I. If a player's flag inadvertently falls off while he is in possession of the ball, the ball will be dead at the spot the flag falls off.
- J. Exception: Break Away Runner, if the ball carrier, has cleared all defensive players by an excess of 15 yards, and in the opinion of the officials would not have been caught by the defender the play remains live.

NOTE: The flags will be attached to a belt made for that purpose and must be the matching belt sold with that flag. Such a belt has equal resistance at the point of attachment of flags, thereby insuring an equal effort necessary to de- flag a player. Once a check in has been conducted, no equipment shall be exchanged.

3. Game Uniform:

- A. All team members must wear the same color jersey.
- B. Any type of pants may be worn. However, they must not have pockets or belt loops.
- C. Jerseys will be tucked in always
- D. Sneakers are the preferred shoe; however, non-detachable, rubber cleated shoes are allowed. No other footwear is acceptable
- E. Socks (preferably those that come up to the calf)
- F. All male players must wear athletic supporters and hard cups. All female players will wear athletic supporter and soft cup.

4. **Eyeglasses:** Eyeglasses, when worn, shall be of athletically approved construction with non-shattering glass (safety glass).

5. **Mouthguard:** Mouth guards are mandatory; no keeper strap is necessary. Mouth guards must be colored; clear and white mouth guards are not permitted.

RULE 4: PRE-GAME AND AFTER GAME REQUIREMENTS

1. There will be a pre-game inspection no more than 15 minutes prior to the scheduled game. The inspection will be conducted in a location designated by the Referees. Players will be checked against their team's official roster, the proper uniform, shoes, cup, and mouth guard and flag belt. The inspection will be conducted by each team's Business Manager and Equipment Manager. The Business Manager may stop the check in process if parents or other non-approved individuals are in the check in area. Coaches with "NO" identification card will not be allowed within the "TEAM AREAS".

2. After the game, each team's Head Coach and Business Manager must sign their Mandatory Play Forms and the game Referee signs also. **The Mandatory Play Form MUST be turned into their association president to be passed to the Federation for weekly review.**

RULE 5: PROHIBITED EQUIPMENT

- 3. Spiked or street shoes
- 4. Padding of any kind, including hard surface padding such as shoulder pads, hip pads, and helmets
- 5. Hard metal or any other hard substance on a player's clothing or person
- 6. Anything that conceals the flags
- 7. Slick or sticky substances such as grease or glue
- 8. Any equipment, in the opinion of the referee that will endanger or confuse players

RULE 6: REFEREES (**)

- 1. There will be at least two (2) referees
- 2. There shall be at least two (2) referees for the Flag Fiesta game
- 3. NOTE: Tucson Youth Football & Spirit Federation will supply referees for the Flag Program.

RULE 7: RULES OF PLAY

1. PLAYERS

Each team will field eight (8) players at a time; offense must have at least five (5) players on the line of scrimmage

2. **TEAM CAPTAINS:** Each team can have two (2) captains with a coach for the coin flips, to determine who will choose one of the following: OFFENSE/DEFENSE or DEFER (have choice for 2nd half). Coaches will address the referees only on matter of interpretation and to obtain information.

3. **TEAM COACHES:** One coach for team will be permitted on the field. Coaches will not give any verbal instruction when on the playing field

4. **TIME** There will be:

- A. Two 22-minute halves. The last two (2) minutes of each half, clock will STOP for "penalties, out of bounds and incomplete passes".
- B. Two (2) time-outs per half
- C. Ten (10) minutes between halves

Failure to produce the minimum roster within ten (10) minutes of scheduled game will result in time being taken off for the 1st half of play, according to when team has enough players (10) ready to play. "NO FORFEIT", FIRST GAME ONLY.

5. **KICKOFFS** Field position at start of the half or after a score, play will begin on the offense's ten (10) yard line.

6. PUNTING



PUNTING will not be allowed during a flag football game.

- A. Punting intentions are announced to the referee by the coach, before official blows the whistle for play (penalty) 5 yards, delay of game.
- B. After a team declares they will punt, the ball will be awarded to Team B at their own 15-yard line

7. DOWNS (First down and zone to go)

- A. Each team will have four (4) consecutive downs to advance the ball into the next zone or to score a touchdown. The zones are 1) 10yd to 15yd; 2) 15yd to 30; 3) 30yd to 15yd; 4) 15yd to goal.
- B. Once a team enters the next zone, it is a first down and a new series of downs begins.
- C. A team failing to move the ball into the next zone will lose possession. The opposing team takes over at the point where the ball is declared dead and begins its series of first down and zone to go.
- D. The forward part of the ball touching any line will be the determining factor in measuring for a first down.
- E. A down will be replayed if provided for by the rules (See Rule13)
- F. When the offensive team is in the last zone and has a first down, it will be first down goal to go.
- G. At the end of each down, the referee will place the ball in the center of the field (equal distance from sidelines-not on a hash mark. A team will have 30 seconds to put the ball in play after the ready signal.

8. DE-FLAGGING

- A. There shall be no tackling of the ball carrier or passer
- B. The player carrying or having possession of the ball is down when the flag is removed from his waist (de-flagging). The defensive player shall hold the flag above his head and return it to ball carrier.
- C. The defensive player cannot hold or push the ball carrier to remove the flag. An accidental touch of the body or shoulder while reaching for the flag shall not be considered a violation; however, touching of the head or face shall be considered a violation. Defensive player cannot take the ball from the carrier.
- D. A defensive player may use his hands to move the blocker's hands away from him, push the blocker sideways to get past him. But he cannot push the blocker down. PLAYERS CANNOT use their hands above any player's shoulders.
- E. A defensive player must go for the passer's flag. He cannot touch the passer's arm.
- F. If a player's flag is inadvertently lost before the start of play, he is still eligible to receive the ball. The ball will be dead at the spot the player controlled the ball.

9. BLOCKING

- A. A blocker must be on his/her feet always while blocking. All linemen, except the center, CANNOT assume the three (3/4) point stance or otherwise spring from a coiled or crouching start. The Center, though crouching if he is to block, must first stand up to block/receive the ball or be touched by a defensive player.
- B. Cross body and roll blocking are not permitted.
- C. A blocker may use an open palm, to block below the shoulders of the defensive players. The Blocker's arms can be straight or bent when blocking but cannot be used in a pushing (in and out) manner. Players cannot run over or push any player to the ground.
- D. A blocker may block two (2) yards past the line of scrimmage. Beyond two (2) yards, can only screen or get in the way of the defensive player, players cannot extend arms or attempt to block.
- E. A defensive player cannot block or push a ball carrier out of bounds.
- F. Butting, elbowing or knee blocking is not permitted.
- G. There will be no two on one blocking for the ball carrier beyond/pass the line of scrimmage
- H. Blocking a player from behind is not permitted(clipping). I. There will be no interlocking blocking.

10. BALL CARRIER

- A. The ball carrier cannot use his/her hands or arms to protect his flags. The defensive player must have the opportunity to remove the ball carrier's flags.
- B. The ball carrier cannot lower his/her head or shoulder to run into a defensive player
- C. Stiff-arming by the ball carrier is **illegal**
- D. The ball carrier cannot spin or hurdle to prevent a defensive player from removing his/her flags. CENTER (also see 9A)
- E. The center must snap the ball between his legs
- F. He/she must have both feet behind the forward point of the ball
- G. He/she may adjust the long part of the ball at right angles to the scrimmage line.
- H. The center cannot block/receive ball, until he/she stands after the snap. Until, the center has stood up in the blocking position, the defensive player(s) cannot touch him.

11. PASSING

- A. All players are eligible to pass
- B. A lateral pass is a pass thrown parallel to the line of scrimmage or back toward the passer's own goal line. A lateral pass is not considered a forward pass.
- C. A forward pass is a pass thrown from behind the line of scrimmage toward the defensive teams' goal line. Receiver in front of passer. Only one (1) forward pass is allowed per play.

12. RECEIVING

- A. All players are eligible to receive forward passes
- B. A receiver may catch a ball if he comes down with one foot in bounds
- C. Two or more receivers may touch a ball in succession resulting in a completed pass
- D. If an offense or defensive player catches a pass simultaneously, the offensive team is awarded possession
- E. An offensive player cannot be out of bounds and return in bounds to catch a pass unless forced out by a defensive player. This will be ruled an incomplete pass.

13. DEAD BALL

All balls touching the ground are immediately dead (punts). The ball is declared dead at the following times:

- A. When the ball carrier touches the ground with his body, knee or elbows.



- B. When the ball carrier's flag has been pulled.
- C. If a receiver or ball carrier has a missing flag ball is dead at the spot the ball is controlled. (Exception – see Rule 3.2.h. – break-away runner)
- D. When the ball carrier goes out of bound.
- E. If the center snap hits the ground before reaching a backfield player (except on punts).
- F. When the ball hits the ground because of a fumble or muffed ball. THERE ARE NO FUMBLE RECOVERIES.
- G. If a lateral pass touches the ground (ball is declared dead at that point). If a lateral pass goes out of bounds, the ball is ruled dead at the point it crosses the boundary line.
- H. When a player on the punting team touches the ball before a player on the receiving team touches ball. I. A free catch (cannot be advanced).

14. GAME TERMINATION/MERCY RULE

When one team is 30 or more points ahead at the end of the first half or it takes this lead during the second half, the game is ended at that point. THIS RULE ALSO APPLIES TO TOURNAMENT PLAY.

RULE 8: SCORING VALUES

SCORING VALUES FLAG FOOTBALL

Touchdown	6 POINTS
Safety	2 POINTS
Points After touchdown	
Passing	2 POINTS
Running	1 POINT
Forfeit (offended team wins by)	1 POINT

RULE 9: TIE GAME

1. Tie game will go into the record as such and will not be played off in regular season play.
2. All Tournament Games:
 - A. Ball will be placed in the center of the field. The referee will toss a coin in the presence of the two team captains. The winning captain will have the option of putting the ball in play at mid-field.
 - B. Each team will have four (4) consecutive downs and the winner will be the team gaining the most points or yardage in its series of downs (penetration).
 - C. Penalties will count as incomplete passes ball returned to the line of scrimmage.
 - D. Intercepted passes will count as incomplete passes and the dead ball will returned to the line of scrimmage.
 - E. If the yardage is still the same at the end of each team's four down series, the series will be repeated.

RULE 10: INJURED PLAYERS

Once removed from a game because of injury, a player must sit out at least one down, and may not re-enter the game without the approval of attending medical personnel.

RULE 11: PRACTICES

1. Flag practice starting date will be set by the Federation; however, Associations are permitted to start practice the same date as tackle. Scrimmages will be permitted after two (2) weeks of practice.
2. Practices are limited to three (3) days per week, not to exceed 1 ½ hours each practice, while school is in session, and when school is not in session, practices are limited to four (4) days per week. Not to exceed 2 hours' duration. At the discretion of the Head Coach and association board, flag teams may change practice time/days to two (2) days per week, not to exceed 2 hours and 15 minutes (including the mandatory 15-minute break).
3. Flag players must have ten (10) hours of conditioning before participating in scrimmages/games.

RULE 12: SCHEDULE ()** The TYFSF season starting date (first game) will be set by the Federation Maximum number of games per season shall be as follows for each division of play:

Division	Pre-season	Regular Season	Fiesta Game
Flag	1	8	1

TYFSF has adopted an eight (8) game regular season for Flag Football.

RULE 13: FIESTA GAMES ()**

If possible, there will be a Fiesta exhibition game to conclude the season. **RULE 14: PENALTIES** Since two football field sizes can be used, penalties are adjusted accordingly. The 100-yard field will be assessed the standard fifteen (15) and five (5) yard penalties. The 80-yard field will be assessed ten (10) and five (5) yard penalties. References to penalties will be given as (15-10) and (5-5) in the following listings:

1. Line of Scrimmage –Centering

- A. Offside, defensive, or offensive (5-5)
- B. Illegal snap (5-5)
- C. Failure to observe 30 second rule (5-5)
- D. Illegal motion-more than one backfield man in motion (5-5)
- E. Illegal formation, offense (5-5)

2. Punting

- A. Failure to announce to the referee (5-5) and punt is repeated, or the receiving team may take the ball at the spot where the ball is declared dead.
- B. If the kicking or receiving team enters the neutral zone before the punt (5-5) from the spot.
- C. Less than five players on the line of scrimmage for the offensive or defensive team (5-5).
- D. De-flagging a receiver after a fair catch signal (15-10) from the spot of the foul.

3. Passing



- A. If an illegal forward pass is thrown and intercepted, the play will continue until the ball is declared dead. The intercepting team has the option of possession from that spot or accepting the penalty (5-5).
- B. Passer crosses the line of scrimmage (5-5) and loss of down.
- C. Intentional grounding (5-5) and loss of down.
- D. Offensive pass interference (15-10) from line of scrimmage and loss of down.
- E. Defensive pass interference AUTOMATIC first down from spot of infraction for the offensive team
- F. Roughing the passer (15-10) AUTOMATIC FIRST DOWN

4. Delay of Game

- A. Continuing to play after the ball is dead (5-5) from spot where the ball is dead.
- B. Recovering a fumble or falling on the ball (5-5).
- C. Advancing a fair catch (5-5)
- D. Unnecessary delay of game – 30 second/ready for play
- E. All spectators including Team parents must be 5 yards from sidelines (5-5)

5. Flag Wearing and De-Flagging

- A. Tackling (15-10)
- B. Wearing the flags illegally (5-5)
- C. Ball carrier using his hands to prevent de-flagging SPINNING/HURDLING (15-10)
- D. Holding, pushing, or hitting the ball carrier while de-flagging (15-10)
- E. Leaving one's feet while de-flagging, from spot of foul (15-10).
- F. Wearing one flag (5-5)

6. Illegal Hand Off

- A. If the ball is handed forward beyond the scrimmage line (5-5) and loss of down.
- B. Handing or snapping a ball to a lineman (5-5).

7. Illegal Substitutions

- A. More than eight (8) men on the field (5-5)
- B. Substitution(s) while the ball is in play or before it is declared dead (5-5).
- C. Disqualified player entering game (15-10)

8. Blocking

- A. Leaving feet to block (15-10)
- B. Cross body blocking or roll blocking (15-10)
- C. Pushing or knocking down a player by blocker (15-10)
- D. Holding a defensive player (15-10)
- E. Defensive player blocking or pushing the ball carrier out of bounds (15-10)
- F. Butting, elbowing or knee blocking (15-10)
- G. Defensive player using hands illegally (15-10)
- H. More than two blockers for the ball carrier (on one defensive player) beyond the line of scrimmage (5-5)
- I. Clipping (15-10)
- J. Interlock Blocking from spot of foul (15-10)

9. Ball Carrier

- A. Stiff arming from spot of foul (15-10)
- B. Lowering head to drive or run into defensive player (15-10)
- C. Use of head (15-10)
- D. Use of hand or arms to protect flags (15-10)
- E. Spinning or hurdling (5-5)

10. Unnecessary Roughness

- A. Offensive and Defensive (15-10)
- B. Disqualification of guilty players or players if repeated.

11. Unsportsmanlike Conduct

- A. Fighting (15-10) offenders ejected from game.
- B. Defensive player pulling offensive player's flag to make him ineligible for play (15-10)
- C. Insulting and abusive language (15-10)
- D. Interference with progress of the game by coaches or any other team personnel (15-10)
- E. Illegal play (15-10)
- F. Team leaving field before game is completed (15-10). Failure to return- Forfeit. Win for the team remaining on the field.
- G. Failure of home team to control players or fans (15-10)

RULE 15: PROTESTS

- 1. Only protests involving rules' interpretations, or the eligibility of a player shall be considered. Never the judgment of an official calling a play.
- 2. Protests are decided at the local level in accordance with the administrative procedures of the league.

RULE 16: PERSONNEL

- 1. Non-credentialed personnel and players not on the roster for that team are not permitted to sit or enter between the 15-yard markers of the field. This area is for the rostered coaches and players only.
- 2. All spectators must sit or stand between the 15-yard marker and goal line markers on either side of the field.
- 3. Failure to comply with a request to leave this area can result in ejection from the field.