HS Girls Flag Football
Rules & Regulations

1. Attire / Equipment

1.1. Cleats are allowed but must be rubber. Inspections must be made prior to the game.

1.2. It is required that all players wear a protective mouthpiece.

1.3. Shirts must be tucked into shorts or pants.

1.4. All players must wear two flags (High School), one on each hip.

1.5. All players must wear “Flag-a-tag sonic boom 42-inch flag football belt” brand flags during competition.

1.6. Schools are required to supply flags and mouthpieces for players.

1.7. Each team should provide their own footballs for warm-up and gameplay purposes.

1.8. All game footballs should be Junior size certified (Middle School).

1.9. All game footballs should be NFHS size certified (High School).

2. Field Dimensions & Markings

2.1. Length: ~60 yards.

2.2. Width: ~30 yards.

2.3. End Zones: Maximum 10 yards deep.

3. Possession

3.1. Each team must send one team captain to the coin toss

3.2. The winner of the coin toss can choose to:

1. Start with possession of the ball
2. Defer to the second half

3.3. Visiting team chooses heads or tails.

3.4. Visiting team must decide on heads or tails when instructed by an official.

3.5. There are no kickoffs or throw offs.

3.6. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four plays to cross midfield. On fourth down, the team that has offensive possession can choose to “punt” or attempt to convert on fourth down.

3.7. Once a team crosses midfield, they have four plays to score a touchdown.

3.8. On fourth down, the team that has offensive possession can choose to “punt” or attempt to convert on fourth down.

3.9. On fourth down, the offensive coach must make a verbal declaration of their decision to “punt” or “go for it”.

3.10. If the offense decides to “go for it” on fourth down, and does not succeed, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over at the line of scrimmage.

3.11. An automatic first down by penalty will overrule the other requirements regarding four plays to make either a first down or score.

3.12. Teams change directions at halftime.

4. Rosters

4.1. Teams must have 7 players per side on offense and defense.

4.2. Team rosters consist of a maximum of 24 players.

5. Timing / Overtime

5.1. Game length is 2, 20-minute halves, running time except for the last minute of Each Half in which there will be clock stoppage. Under a minute clock will stop for the following:

a. The clock will stop for all time-outs, penalties, scoring play, a change of possession, incomplete pass, or if a player is out of bounds before being de-flagged.

b. Safety – clock starts on the snap. Team time out – clock starts on the snap.

c. Touchdown / PAT attempt – clock starts on the snap.

d. Penalty and Administration - clock starts on the snap.

e. Change of Possession - clock starts on the snap.

f. With under a minute left in a game, if a team has a lead and has possession of the ball, they must gain at least a yard, or the clock will stop until the next snap of the ball. This rule only applies to the 2nd half of the game.

5.2. If the score is tied at the end of regulation time, teams move directly into overtime. A coin toss determines the first possession of overtime. The team that wins the coin toss starts with the ball on the ten-yard line going towards the end zone. Each team is given one possession, if the score is tied at the end of each possession, the game results in a tie.

5.4. Overtime in the playoffs, teams will alternate possession, in which the game ends on the next score.

5.5. Each time the ball is spotted the offense has 30 seconds to snap the ball.

5.6. Each team has 2 60-second timeouts per half. The clock stops during a time out. These cannot be carried over to the second half or overtime.

5.7. There are no timeouts in overtime.

5.8. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.

5.9. The teams will be warned when there is 1-minute left to play in each half.

5.10. The game cannot end on an accepted defensive penalty.

5.11. Halftime will be 3 minutes(or less)

5.12. Clock will stop on all touchdowns and conversions when under a minute.

6. Scoring

6.1. Touchdown: 6 points

6.2. Extra point: 1 point (played from 5-yard line)

6.3. 2 points (played from 10-yard line)

6.4. Safety: 2 points

6.5. An interception return to the opponent's end zone on any extra-point play by the defense will result in the defense scoring 2 points plus gaining possession for the next series at its own 5-yard line.

6.6. A mercy rule will be enforced once any team is leading by 30 or more points with 5 minutes left in the 2nd half.

6.7. Once a mercy rule is enforced, the game will be called, and the score will be reported as the score at the time of the mercy.

7. Gameplay Rules

7.1. The CPSAL flag game is seven vs. seven. However, if the team starts with the required seven players, and as a result of injuries or other events loses players, the minimum number of players a team is required to maintain after the start of the game in order to play is five. The other team may continue with seven and is not required to play with five players.

7.2. Coin Toss

7.2.1. The winner of the coin toss may elect to defer their choice to the second half, thereby giving the loser of the coin toss the option for the first half, and the winner the option for the second half.

7.2.2. At the discretion of the referee, just prior to conducting the coin toss, the officials will instruct each coach to line up all eligible players along his/her team's sideline. The referees will inspect the players for proper equipment, including uniform, mouthguards, and proper cleats. Any player not conforming will be told that he/she is not conforming and be given an opportunity to make the correction before the start of the game. If that player continues to be non-conforming then he/she will be ineligible to play in that game.

7.3. First Downs

7.3.1. The line-to-gain is the yard line established when a new series (1st down) is the 50-yard line. A team has four downs to reach the line to gain, unless there is a penalty that resets the downs or causes a loss of down.

7.4. Pass Rushing.

7.4.1. Pass rushing is the act of passing the line of scrimmage in an attempt to disrupt the pass or de-flag the passer or runner.

7.4.2. A rusher cannot in any way make contact with a blocker or with the Quarterback. A pass rusher must run around a blocker in an effort to de-flag the passer and/or the runner.

7.4.3. There is no limit as to the amount of rushers a defense may utilize.

7.5. Blocking

7.5.1. An offensive blocker may only "block" behind the line of scrimmage.

7.5.2. There is NO DOWN-FIELD BLOCKING.

7.5.3. A blocker may attempt to impede the pass rusher by shuffling his/her feet side to side in order to obstruct the rusher's path. Neither the rusher, nor the passer may make contact with each other.

7.5.4. The blocker must place his/her hands behind their back or folded across her chest as long as the arms and hands are making clear contact with their own body.

7.6. Intentional Contact

7.6.1. If a rusher makes contact with any offensive player (blocker), other than inadvertent the rusher will incur a ten-yard penalty. No automatic first down.

7.6.2. If a blocker initiates contact with a rusher, other than inadvertent contact the blocker will be penalized with ten yards and a repeat of down.

7.6.3. In a referee's discretion, if the contact is unsportsmanlike, [specifically – if a rusher runs over a blocker, if either side trips the other side or uses her arms or hands in an aggressive manner to shove or push the opposite team] – then a fifteen yard penalty will be assessed, and the players number marked on the official's card. Two unsportsmanlike fouls require that the player be ejected from the game. Any ejection from a game will result in suspensions from additional games as set forth in the relevant rules.

7.7. Unlimited Runs:

7.7.1. The offense has an unlimited amount of run plays. There are no "NO RUN ZONES".

7.8. Snaps

7.8.1. Each Team will have a Center to snap the ball. The Center can snap the ball between his/her legs, as in the typical snap, and may also snap the ball in a modified, sideways snap. If a modified snap is done, Center CANNOT go out for a pass.

7.8.2. The Offense must have at least four players within one yard of the line of scrimmage on every snap.

7.8.3. The Quarterback MUST be at least two yards behind the line of scrimmage and may NOT take a under the center snap from under center.

7.9. Defensive Neutral Zone

7.9.1. Defender will have to line up one yard from the line of scrimmage prior to the snap. Referee will make that indication clear to all players on field.

7.9.2. A ball carrier is down when she has her flag pulled.

7.9.3. The player is down at the spot where the player's waist was located at time of pull, not where the ball is. (Down at spot of pull)

7.9.4. If a player's flag inadvertently falls off, meaning it was not actually pulled by the opposing team, it then becomes a one-hand touch to stop the player.
7.9.5. There is no jumping or diving forward to avoid being de-flagged.
7.9.6. A player possessing the ball who leaves his/her feet in a forward motion will be penalized five yards from the spot of the foul. The play should be whistled dead at that time.
7.9.7. A ball carrier may jump backwards or side-to-side, in what is called a “juke” movement and may spin to avoid having their flag pulled. There is no other acceptable form of protecting a players’ flag, including, but not limited to, use of hands, arms, elbows, bull-rushing, or some form of modified running which is clearly for the sole purpose to guard a player’s flags against being pulled.
7.9.8. There is absolutely no slapping or hitting a ball that is in the possession of a ball carrier. This is an unsportsmanlike foul and carries a penalty of fifteen yards.
7.9.9. A player may bat down, hit or slap a ball that is in the air and, not in the receiving players’ possession, in an effort to deflect the ball, and disrupt the catch.
7.9.10. Touchbacks are placed on the 5 yard line.

8. Running

8.1. The quarterback can run at any time during the possession

8.2. An offense may use multiple handoffs behind the line of scrimmage. Only backward or lateral handoffs are allowed after crossing LOS.

8.3. Tosses or sweeps behind the line of scrimmage are allowed and are running plays. Downfield tosses after a lateral behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Once a player has possession of the ball beyond the line of scrimmage, any loss of possession will be blown dead by the official.

9. Receiving

9.1. All players are eligible to receive passes including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage. (excluding a center that snapped a modified snap).

9.2. One player can be in motion at the snap of the ball (player in motion must go laterally and cannot turn upfield before the snap).

9.3. A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception (A receiver cannot be first player to touch the ball if they return on to the playing field from an out of bounds position. If that receiver touches the ball first upon returning to the field of play from an out of bounds position, it will result in a 5 yard penalty for illegal touching and a loss of down).

11. Dead Balls

11.1. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.

11.2. Play is ruled "dead" when:

a. Official blows the whistle.
b. Ball carrier's flag is pulled or becomes illegal.
c. Ball carrier steps out of bounds.
d. Touchdown or safety is scored.
e. Any part of the ball carrier's body, other than hand or foot, touches the ground.

11.3. Players are eligible to catch a pass if their flag has fallen off (once they catch the ball and is touched by the opposing player, play is dead).

11.4. There are no fumbles. A fumble is defined as a ball carrier losing the possession of the ball and the ball hitting the ground before anyone else possesses it. The ball will be spotted where the ball carrier's feet were when the fumble occured.

11.5. Defense is responsible for retrieving the ball after play stops. Offense is responsible for moving the LOS cone after advancement of the ball.
(Time may stop to allow offense to retrieve ball if defense refuse to comply)

13. Sportsmanship / Roughing

13.1. If the referee witnesses any acts of flagrant contact, tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking, or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped, and the player will

be ejected from the tournament. FOUL PLAY AND FOUL LANGUAGE WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.

13.2. Unsportsmanlike Conduct will not be tolerated. Officials have the right to determine any action and/or language that may be inappropriate. If these actions occur, the referee can impose a 15-yard penalty and/or eject any players, coaches, or spectators as they feel necessary.

13.3. Once a flag is pulled, the defensive player should hold the flag above his/her head so that the referee can spot the location of the flag pull. The pulled flag should be handed to the player who lost the flag or to a teammate. Intentionally throwing the flag onto the ground is considered poor flag etiquette.

14. Penalties

14.1. All penalties are 5 yards (except for Pass Interference & Unsportsmanlike Conduct- 10 yards and intentional contact – 10 yards). The down will be repeated, and will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, unless your defending endzone is within those yards of distance to which “half the distance” will be taken or otherwise noted.

14.2. All penalties can be declined.

14.3. Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.

14.4. All penalties will be assessed from the original line of scrimmage except for holding in an attempt to grab the flag. 5 yards will be added to the end of the run.

14.5. Only the team captain may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players cannot question judgment calls.

14.6. Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines the penalty.

14.7. 5 yard penalty assessed (once per drive) for any player not wearing a mouthpiece during play.

14.8. No fans or players are allowed past the 10 yard line unless referee indicates otherwise

14.9 Taunting with the ball (running into the endzone while taunting the opposing team) will result in an automatic down at the spot of foul, 10 yard penalty and loss of down. If taunting is called on, it will be treated as an unsportsmanlike penalty. Both will be given to the player directly, receiving two will disqualify the player from the current game as well as further consequences as described by rules.

15.Defensive Penalties

15.1. Offside - 5 yard penalty.

15.2. Pass Interference - 10 yard penalty and automatic first down.

15.3. Illegal contact (holding, blocking, etc.) - 5 yard penalty.

15.4. Illegal flag pull (before receiver has ball) - 5 yard penalty.

15.5. Intentional contact (Intentionally running into another player) - 10 yard penalty.

15.6. Substitution fouls (player enters field after ball has already been hiked, i.e. to deceive opponents, or more than 7 players on the field) - 5 yard penalty.

15.7. Disconcerting signals (signals to distract opponent or simulate offensive signals prior to snap) – 5 yard penalty.

15.8. Interference with opponent or ball at the snap. – 5 yard penalty.

16. Offensive Penalties

16.1. Delay of game–5 yard penalty.

16.2. Substitution fouls (player enters field after ball has already been hiked, i.e. to deceive opponents, or more than 7 players on the field) - 5 yard penalty.

16.3. Illegal motion (more than one person moving, etc.) - 5 yard penalty.

16.4. False Start- 5 yard penalty.

16.5. Illegal Snap / Illegal Man Downfield - 5 yard penalty.

16.6. Offensive holding- 5 yard penalty.

16.7. Illegal shift - 5 yard penalty.

16.8. Illegal Touching (if player goes out of bounds, player cannot return to the field and be the first to touch the ball) - 5 yard penalty and loss of down.

16.9. Illegal forward pass (pass thrown forward beyond the line of scrimmage) - 5 yard penalty and loss of down.

16.10. Offensive pass interference (illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender) - 10 yards and loss of down.

16.11. Flag guarding - 5 yard penalty from spot of foul and loss of down.

17. Blocking / Screening

17.1. Offensive players may screen defensive players.

17.2. No blocking or screening allowed down field or during interception returns.

17.3. Screen blocking: shall be defined as obstructing the rusher's path to the quarterback or ball carrier, as long as it is done behind the L.O.S. with any part of the body except head, hips, and legs. There can be no independent movement of the elbows.

17.4. The screener must use one of the three following methods:

1. Screeners must clearly have their arms and hands connected to their body.
2. Screeners must hold their arms behind their back with arms locked together in some manner. A screener may not leave their feet to screen.
3. Arms are crossed in an X on your chest, elbows pinned to your torso.

18. Uniforms

18.1. Players must wear the number they are assigned on the roster. Any changes must be reported to the league prior to making the number change. Mouth pieces and the correct cleats and flag belt are also a part of the correct uniform. Every time a player in violation of the rule enters the field of play, this will result in a 5 yard penalty (once a drive)

19. Protests Protocol

19.1. Protests may only be made if a rule is alleged to have been applied incorrectly, or not applied.

19.2. No protest of judgment calls may be entered.

19.3. Coach must verbally inform the referee of the protest before play commences or resumes.

a) Judgment calls include (but are not limited to):

- Determination of Football Spot / First Down Calls
- No Call due to incidental contact
- In Game Penalties
- Use of Foul Language
- Laterals

19.4. All protests of rules interpretations and athlete eligibility must be made in writing and emailed to the Director of Athletics within 24 hours of completion of the game.

19.5. All protests must be completed on the proper Protest form or sent through email to the commissioner.

19.6. All protest forms are on CPSAL website (cpsal.org) under documents.

19.7. The league will investigate all protests and will deliver a ruling within 24 hours of receipt of protest. If a ruling cannot be made within 48 hours, the protesting coach will be notified of the delay and informed of when to expect a ruling.