



# Flag Football Rules



## 1. Pre-Game – Spirit Points, Equipment, Game Time, Defaults, Fields

Play that is competitive, overly aggressive, rough and/or unsportsmanlike such as pushing, shoving, elbowing, shouldering, tripping, hacking, slashing, sliding, tackling, ball blasting, chirping, name calling, threats and intimidation, is prohibited and will not be tolerated by FCSSC. FCSSC IS FIRST-AND-FOREMOST-FOR-FUN. ANY ROUGH OR PHYSICAL PLAY WILL RESULT IN IMMEDIATE EXPULSION FROM THE GAME, THE LEAGUE, THE CLUB AND/OR ALL OF THE ABOVE. All players should go out of their way to avoid contact with other players and/or eliminate actions or behaviours that could jeopardize player safety. If accidental contact occurs it is expected that players will apologize for that contact, ensure everyone is alright and stop the game to seek appropriate help as required. **THIS RULE SUPERSEDES ALL OTHERS!**

**Spirit Points:** An integral part of all the sports that the Forest City Sport & Social Club offers. It is based on the primary focus of the FCSSC, which is sportsmanship and to have FUN...NOT on competitive and aggressive sport.

**Equipment/Set-Up:** FCSSC Game Coordinators will provide flags, nets and a ball for each game. Teams are to provide their own equipment for warm up. In addition, FCSSC's Game Coordinator will keep score when possible (ie. Only one game at a time). If the FCSSC Game Coordinator is unable to keep score, we ask that each team select a player to assist in keeping score. Each team should bring both light and dark coloured shirts to each and every game.

### **Game Time/Default:**

- Please arrive 15 minutes early to ensure that your games start on time.
- Games are 90 minutes in length, with a stoppage for halftime for 2-5 mins.
- Teams are comprised of seven (7) OUTDOOR GRASS and five (5) for INDOOR TURF players. A default will occur if any team cannot field a squad 10 minutes after the official start time.
- A team can play with a minimum of 6 people (outdoors) and 4 people (turf), as long as there are two (2) of each gender on the field. Captains may agree to waive the rules regarding minimum players but this should be decided before the game starts. IF IT IS AGREED THAT THE GAME COUNTS, IT COUNTS!

**Foul Weather:** FCSSC plays rain or shine or snow, but not in severe weather. In the event of extreme weather (i.e. electrical storms, snow storm, hail, etc.) games should immediately be stopped and players should take cover away from open spaces. Wait 15 minutes; if the severe weather passes, continue play. If it does not and the game was in the first half, the game must be re-played. If it was in the 2nd half, then the score at that time of when the game is stopped will count as the final score.

## 2. In Game – General Rules, Fouls, Punting, Spinning, Ending the Game, Making Calls & Rough Play

### **General Rules:**

1. Unsportsmanlike play WILL NOT be tolerated. Experienced football players should leave their notions of physical play as being an integral part of the game at home...IT IS NOT WELCOME HERE.
2. All Players must use the provided flags. Players cannot bring their own flags.
3. Please wear shorts/pants with NO pockets. This will reduce finger injuries when trying to grab the flags.
4. A coin toss by the GC (or rock, paper, scissors!) will decide who will receive the opening kick-off.

5. The kicking team will kick-off from their own end zone line. All players on the team must line-up behind the kicker and can only start to run downfield once the ball has been kicked. If the ball is kicked out of bounds, the offensive team will start their drive at the spot where the ball left the playing area – there is NOT an option to ask for a re-kick.
6. Offensive players may not block or otherwise obstruct any defensive players. This means if they do not have the football, they should not be running in front or right beside their teammate who is carrying the football.
7. Offensive players cannot protect/cover/hide/block his/her flag. If the person with the ball blocks the defenders hand from grabbing their flag, the play is dead where the block occurred.
8. Flags should be placed on the hips of each player at the outset of each play. The flag must be on top of all clothing and cannot be folded over such that the Velcro attachment is on the inside. If a flag inadvertently falls off the ball carrier, or if a player attempts to grab a flag and there is not one on the hip of the offensive player, the play is stopped at that location. Defensive players CANNOT grab flags before the ball is received by the offensive player. If that is to happen, the play remains live (continues on) and the offending team is left with only one flag to grab. (rule updated July 23)
9. An offensive player can dive or jump to catch a ball, but once in possession he/she cannot leave their feet at any time. This includes all forms of jumping and diving. If the ball carrier breaks this rule, the play is dead at the point where the player stood before the infraction.
10. First point of contact: A receiver is determined to be "in" or "out" based on their first point of contact with the ground. If a player lands first with one foot in-bounds, and then the other foot touches down out-of-bounds, it IS a fair catch, but the play ends where they touched the out of bounds line. If a player catches the ball, but is straddling or lands straddling the sideline, it is NOT a catch. Only a ONE foot landing is needed - as long as that foot touches down in-bounds.
11. Receivers are not allowed to go out of bounds and come back into the field of play to catch balls
12. Scoring: A point is scored when a player catches any legal pass or runs the ball into the defensive end zone prior to having one of their flags stripped. Please note that it is not enough to have the "plain of the end zone" broken by the ball - to score a player must step over the line in the end zone.
13. The offensive team has four (4) downs to cover the entire field.
14. The offensive team may punt on the 4th down, and need to notify the defense of their intentions to do so.
15. The defense must loudly count five (5) "steamwhistles" before rushing the quarterback. While counting, the defense must line up at or behind the line of scrimmage.
16. The quarterback may only run the football at the end of the 5 "steamwhistles" when and if the defense crosses the line of scrimmage. This pertains to any defensive player (not just the player covering the qb)
17. Teams receive one (1) point for each touchdown. There are no conversions.
18. From the time the ball is placed on the line of scrimmage, the offense has 30 "steamwhistles" to start the next play. Running down the clock with an unnecessarily long huddle is not an acceptable strategy.
19. **NEW RULE for INDOOR TURF ONLY:** Once the ball is snapped, the defensive team will count 5 "steamwhistles" before crossing the line of scrimmage/rushing the QB. If the defensive player chooses to not rush the QB/cross the line of scrimmage after they have counted 5 "steamwhistles" then the QB can begin counting 5 "steamwhistles" (out loud), once the QB has counted to 5 he/she can then run with the ball up field. This rule is meant to avoid deadlocks/stand-offs on the smaller field and keep the pace of the game moving. (revised Nov 1, 2013).
20. If the ball is kicked through the end zone on either a punt or kick-off (or kicked into the end zone and the receiving team elects not to run the ball out by letting the ball go), the offensive team will start their drive 10 paces out from their end zone, in the centre of the field. If the receiving team elects to catch the ball in the end zone (or runs back into the end zone after catching the ball), the receiver is in play and runs the risk of being tackled in his/her own end zone.
21. Teams may call a one (1) minute time-out per half if needed except during the last 10 minutes of play
22. There are no fumbles - if the ball is dropped by an offensive player while running or after catching the football, the ball is dead where it hits the ground. This will avoid unsafe plays by players diving for the football.

#### Fouls:

- Safe Plays: A defender may not step in front of the ball carrier or block a running lane if it has the potential to create an unsafe play. Likewise, an offensive player should not run with their head down, in an attempt to run through the defenders. In other words, incidental contact is inevitable, but players should not be run over. Please use your best judgment.
- If a defending team sacks the quarterback (or any offensive player with the ball) in the offensive end zone, the ball is turned over at midfield to the defending team. No points are scored.
- Fouls (including picks) that are called by the offence or defence will lead to a re-down (the play starting over from the line of scrimmage).
- Once a foul is called, the play must stop and the play is started over.
- If the offence/defence is fouled, they can choose not to call a foul if it is an advantage to do so. ie a receiver is fouled as they catch the ball and continues to run the ball in for a touchdown.

- Other obscure or minor NFL or CFL rules WILL NOT APPLY (e.g. it is NOT a foul if a defensive player has his/her back to the ball and inadvertently blocks a pass with their arms or back of their head).

#### **Punting:**

- Teams must inform the opposing team that they are punting. The Kicking team CANNOT cross the line of scrimmage until the ball is kicked by the punter. The receiving team has 3 options, 1) Catch the ball and run with it, 2) let the ball land and take possession from where the ball lands after it has finished bouncing and has completely settled. 3) If the receiving team attempts to catch the ball and it is dropped, they get possession from where the ball was drop. (rule updated July 23)
- During punts, offensive players must give the receiving team room to be able to catch the football (or they can ask for a re-kick).

**Spinning:** An offensive player CAN turn their bodies from side to side, but CANNOT spin 360 degrees. This prevents defensive players from injuring their fingers. If a player spins, the ball is dead at the point where the spin occurred.

#### **Ending the Half or Game:**

- With three minutes to go in the half or game, the current offensive team has 5 plays left in the half (game). If the current offensive team scores after the first play, the defensive team at the 3 minute mark begins their offence and has 4 more plays to score. A kickoff after a touchdown is not considered a play.
- A game can end in a tie during the regular season. In the playoffs, if a game is tied at the end of regulation time, the game continues until a team has scored to break the tie.

**Making Calls:** It is extremely important that all players (especially team captains) make the appropriate calls for infractions and illegal plays. Every punting, spinning, roughing, pushing, etc, must be called and play must be stopped. Only players that are currently on the field at the time of an infraction may make a call.

**ROUGH PLAY:** ANY ROUGH OR PHYSICAL PLAY WILL RESULT IN IMMEDIATE EXPULSION FROM FURTHER LEAGUE PLAY AND MAY RESULT IN LIFETIME LEAGUE EXPULSION. PLEASE SEE THE FCSSC POLICY SHEET FOR OUR OFFICIAL POLICY ON THIS SUBJECT. It is recognized that incidental contact between players is inevitable – however, all players should go out of their way to avoid creating an unsafe play. **THIS RULE SUPERSEDES ALL OTHERS.**

### **3. Post-Game – Score Reporting, Spirit Points, Departure**

**Score Reporting:** Captains from each team are responsible to reporting or confirming games scores within 48 hours of the completion of the game. Scores can be reported or confirmed via our website at [www.fcssc.ca](http://www.fcssc.ca).

**Spirit Points:** Captains are also responsible for submitting a “Spirit” score for the opposing team each week. This is done when the score is reported or confirmed on the FCSSC website. Spirit points allow you to score your opponent based on your experience playing against them. You can score them based on how fun they were to play against, did they show good sportsmanship, did they follow and know the rules, did they arrive on time etc. All teams should shoot for PERFECT Spirit Points!

**Departure:** Each week after your game, it is important to leave the court in a timely manner. Teams could be playing after you and will need to get their game started on time. It is also possible that the facility could be closing upon the completion of your game and all staff and members will need to depart the building at that time.