



ADULT FLAG FOOTBALL RULES & REGULATIONS

These guidelines represent minimum standards of Adult Flag Football play suggested by the Florida Flag Football League.

SECTION I
GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

A. Teams

1. **Certification:** Any team that participates in any Florida Sports Foundation (FFFL) sanctioned league or tournament must be FFFL certified in the current year. The team manager must present proof of certification or must pay the certification fee before participating in the tournament/league. Failure to obtain certification will prevent the team from participating in the tournament/league and will result in forfeiture of the entry fee.
2. **Eligibility:** To qualify for FFFL certification and to file for certification, the team manager must complete the proper certification form, which is available from the local league director, tournament director, or Florida Flag Football League. This completed form is given to the league or tournament director for forwarding to FFFL, or may be sent directly to FFFL. There is a team certification fee that must be paid to FFFL. The league director usually includes this fee as part of the league entry fee and then forwards the appropriate amount to the FFFL. A Certification Year runs from January 1 - December 31.

NOTE: Traditionally, State Ranking Tournament play begins before most leagues. Since a team must be certified to play in any ranking tournament and since most teams have not filed for certification due to the later start of their local league, any team in this situation must file completed certification forms and pay the certification fee to that tournament director. The tournament director will forward the forms and fees to FFFL. FFFL will provide each local league director with a list of the certified teams. FFFL will either credit or reimburse a team for the fees paid twice.

3. **Team Manager:** The team manager is the official team representative. The manager will appoint offensive and defensive captains prior to the game.
4. **Spectators:** A team is responsible for the behavior of its fans. The team manager and the team captains will constantly strive to keep the fans from being unruly, verbally and/or physically abusive towards any other individual and/or behaving in an unsportsmanlike manner. A referee may charge a team with an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty, a gross unsportsmanlike conduct penalty, or a forfeit based on any undesirable behavior of that team's fans. A referee may eject any fan(s) from the facility. The fan(s) must leave the facility within

two minutes or a forfeit will be charged against that fan's team.

5. **Insurance:** The team manager will advise each player on his or her team that the FFFL has no insurance covering accidents that occur during participation in the FFFL Flag Football Program and that league, tournament, or sponsoring agency officials are not liable for any injury caused to an individual as a result of that individual's voluntary participation in an FFFL sanctioned flag football event. The FFFL Flag Football Committee recommends that each team provide insurance coverage for its players.

B. Players

1. FFFL certification is open to all persons / organizations meeting all requirements of and in good standing with FFFL
2. A player must be 18 years old by the team's first regular season game to be eligible to play.
3. A player may not play for more than one team in the same league, State Ranking Tournament (SRT), or State Championship tournament.
4. Matters regarding the eligibility of a player will be decided by the league/tournament director in charge. Rostered players must provide photo ID/proof of residence or risk ejection from any FFFL Sanctioned event/league.
5. If a player is declared ineligible for any reason, all games in which that player participated will be declared forfeits. The player and his team may be barred from further league or tournament play and will be subject to State Flag Football Committee review and possible disciplinary action.
6. Players must participate in 2 SRT to qualify for State Finals Tournament

C. Roster

1. Roster information includes: each player's name, address, phone number, birth date and signature.
2. Rosters are limited to a maximum of fifteen (15) players.
3. Rosters must be filed with each tournament director. A player is committed to a team when his signature appears on the roster. Teams may add or drop players thru the third scheduled FFFL State Ranking Tournament. Rosters will be frozen beginning at 8:00 a.m. on the Saturday of the fourth SRT. At that time, no additions or deletions will be permitted. (Player drop procedure is covered in FFFL Section II, B5).

D. Equipment and Uniforms

1. Flagbelts

- a. The official FFFL flagbelt is the Triple Threat Flagbelt. Flags issued by the Triple Threat company as part of the Triple Threat Flagbelt measure 14 3/4" in length. Flags may be no shorter and no longer than this specified length.
- b. This flagbelt may never be altered or secured other than according to manufacturer's instructions. Any alterations to or improper securing of the flagbelt will be considered deliberate.
- c. The flagbelt must be worn only about the waist. The flags must hang loosely below the waist on each side and down the back of the player.
- d. The flags must sharply contrast with the color of the player's shorts/pants. It is not required that opponents wear different colored flags.
- e. The entire flagbelt assembly must be completely visible at all times. No part of the flagbelt may be obstructed, concealed, or covered by any part of the player's uniform or equipment except when FFFL *Section II, D5a* applies.
- f. Penalty: Flagbelt violation, 1st violation 10 yards from spot of foul, loss of down. Any deliberate or further violation will be ejection until next game.

2. Jersey/Shirts/Top Coverings

- a. Each teams' players must wear like-colored, different numbered jerseys.
- b. The jersey must be (either/or):
 - No lower than the Solar Plexus area. A jersey that is cut-off at the stomach, waist, or at or near the flagbelt is prohibited.

- Kept tucked inside a player's pants/shorts at all times and may not "blouse out" over nor cover any part of the flagbelt.
- c. The jersey cannot cover the flagbelt or interfere with the flag pull attempt.
- d. A player whose jersey repeatedly comes out over the flagbelt during routine play must mend or wear the jersey in a way that stops this problem or that player will be penalized. A player whose jersey occasionally comes out during routine play or is pulled by an opponent will not be penalized, but may not participate until jersey problem is rectified according to above guidelines.
Ruling: If a jersey comes out over the flagbelt, the player may not participate until jersey problem is rectified according to above guidelines.
Penalty: Repeated or intentional, will result in Unsportsmanlike Conduct 15 yards. Player risks ejection after the first penalty. If the infraction is on the Ball Carrier, this will result in Flag Guarding 10 yards and the player risks ejection after the first penalty.
Ruling: A defender who, while attempting a legal flag pull, grabs, holds, or rips the part of the jersey that actually covers part of the flagbelt will not be penalized for holding.
- e. Each player must check his uniform for possible jersey violations prior to the start of the game and before every play.
- f. Opponents must wear sharply contrasting jerseys. If opponents do not have sharply contrasting jerseys in any tournament game, the team with the higher ranking or seed keeps its color; the lower ranked team must either switch to a different colored jersey or play in skins. If both teams are unranked, the referee will flip a coin to settle the issue. A team that does not abide by this procedure will forfeit the game.
NOTE: *The FFFL recommends that all teams have two sharply contrasting colored jerseys.*
- g. A player may wear any type of shirt or top covering (i.e. t-shirt, sweatshirt) under the game jersey as long it meets all uniform requirements. If an article of clothing has a hood, the hood must remain tucked into the shirt at all times.

3. Shorts/Pants

- a. All players must wear pants/shorts that **DO NOT** have pockets (taped or not), belts, belt loops, belt tunnels, strings, ties, or any other item that is deemed dangerous by the official. They may be made of any cloth material.
- b. It is not required that team members wear matching or same colored pants/shorts.
- c. It is not required that opposing teams wear different colored shorts.

4. Shoes

- a. A player must wear either molded bottom cleats or soft bottom sneakers, tennis shoes, running shoes, soft-soled shoes and football shoes are permitted except when *FFFL Section II 4D* applies.
- b. Shoes that have cleats that screw into a recessed hole on the sole are permitted.
- c. Any shoe that has steel-tipped cleats or steel-reinforced toe or heel, or a square-toe is NOT permitted.
- d. No player may compete shoeless except for that player who actually kicks or punts the ball in kickoff or punting plays.

5. Towels

- a. A player may wear a hand towel tucked in the front part of the waist/flagbelt area. In this situation, the towel becomes a flag. A ball carrier whose towel is pulled by a defender is “tackled” at that spot.
- b. A defender may, while attempting a legal flag pull, hold onto, grab, twist, etc., a ball carrier’s towel without penalty.
- c. A defender who tears apart or rips off any piece of a ball carrier’s towel is credited with a “tackle” at that spot.
- d. The offense may have a full-size towel in the huddle between downs. During plays, the towel may remain on the field ONLY if kept well behind the quarterback.
NOTE: The offense will be penalized if, during a play, the towel somehow negatively affects (i.e. trips, slips up, impedes, wraps up, etc.) any defender who is making an honest effort to rush, chase after/pursue, or “tackle” any offensive player.
- e. The defense may have one full-size towel in the huddle between downs. The towel may not remain anywhere on the field during play.

6. Headwear

- a. On the field a player may wear any type of cloth cap/hat. The player will be penalized if the cap/hat repeatedly falls off during play or if the player repeatedly knocks-off or discards the hat to the field during play.
- b. A cap/hat of no other material than cloth may be worn on the field.
- c. On the sidelines, a player may wear any type of cap/hat.

7. Jewelry

- a. NO jewelry may be worn with the exception of a medical and/or wedding band, and studded pierced earrings. A team warning will be issued at the pre game coin toss
- b. Penalty: The 1st offense will result in a Delay of Game penalty and 5 yards. The 2nd offense will result in the offending player being removed from the remainder of the game. This does not constitute an ejection unless unsportsmanlike conduct accompanies the action.

8. Tape, Gloves, Bandages, Braces, Padding

- a. Tape and/or any type of bandage worn on the hand or a finger, not being used to protect an existing injury, is not permitted.
- b. Gloves are permitted.
- c. Ace bandages, "wet suit" rubber wraps, and similar materials are permitted.
- d. Any type of knee brace or knee support is permitted if all exposed metal is covered on both sides by some type of approved soft padding. No player may wear a pad, brace support, splint or any type of device that has exposed metal.
- e. Hard plastic surfaced or hard plastic reinforced pads or equipment are prohibited. Examples include: helmets, shoulder pads, thigh/forearm pads, etc.
- f. Any type of hard cast that covers any part of a player's arm, wrist, or hand is permitted if covered with approved padding.

9. Ball

- a. Each team must supply its own ball.
- b. Any leather football that meets minimum size requirements of FHSAA or NCAA rules is permitted.
- c. Balls made from any other material than leather are prohibited.

10. Kicking Tee: A non-metal kicking tee with a base that is no higher than 2" is permitted.

11. Penalty for uniform or equipment violations: Before the game, officials will check all players for uniform or equipment violations. If violations are found, the player will be required to fix to conform to these regulations in order to be eligible to play. Failure to conform may result in ejection.

The penalty for ANY equipment or uniform violation, except where otherwise stated in *FFFL Sec II,D.1.f* and *FFFL Sec II,D.2*, that occurs during play will result in:

- **Unsportsmanlike Conduct:** 15 yards from succeeding spot; the player risks ejection and team risks a forfeit after the first occurrence.
- **Gross Unsportsmanlike Conduct:** ½ distance to goal; player is ejected and team risks a forfeit, for repeated violations.

E. Officials

1. Certification: A referee must be FFFL certified to work in any FFFL sanctioned event. Current certification forms and fee information are available from FFFL. Each certified referee will receive a current rulebook, official's hat, official's certification card and newsletter including state rankings.

2. Uniform: Referees will wear the State adopted uniform:

- Black & white striped shirt
- Black official shoes or sneakers
- White socks without stripes
- FFFL official's hat

A referee will have a whistle, a yellow penalty flag, a small note pad, a pen or pencil, ball markers, current rulebook and a coin for the coin toss to begin the game. Referees are expected to maintain a professional appearance at all times during the game.

3. Authority: The referees have authority over any and all aspects of a game. A referee's authority begins 15 minutes before the start of a game and ends 15 minutes after the completion of the game.

4. Jurisdiction: A referee has jurisdiction in controlling player and spectator conduct and ensuring the good spirit of the game. Therefore, the referee may eject a player, a non-playing coach or manager, or a spectator for constant or deliberate violations of the rules, indecent or abusive language, any unsportsmanlike behavior, or gross unsportsmanlike conduct.

- An ejected player may remain on the sidelines unless directed by the referee to leave the facility.
- An ejected non-playing coach or manager and/or any spectator must leave the facility.
- The ejected individual has two minutes to do as directed by the referee or a forfeit will be charged against that individual's team.

5. Inspection of Field of Play: A referee will inspect the playing field and sidelines for irregularities and possible safety hazards. The referee will inform the supervisor or director of the league or tournament of any such irregularities or safety hazards before the game begins.

6. Accountability: A referee is never obligated to discuss a rule

interpretation or a specific game situation with anyone other than a team captain.

7. **Professionalism:** A certified referee is an official representative of the FFFL Flag Football program and is expected to maintain a professional attitude and demeanor at all times during tournament play.
8. **On-field Positions and Primary Responsibilities:**
 - a. The Offensive Line Judge (OLJ) must line up only ON the sideline and EVEN with the offensive line. Since the FFFL does not use sideline sticks for down markers, the OLJ must serve as the scrimmage line marker.
 - At snap, watch for offsides, illegal motion, etc.
 - Watch snap back to QB; make sure clean catch.
 - Quickly look back to line of scrimmage; watch for illegal screen of rusher, illegal picks, offensive and defensive charging, holding, etc.
 - If double pass, watch for rusher intentionally pulling flag or interfering with QB going out for pass; determine if pass is backward or forward; determine if pass is caught.
 - If down field pass, the OLJ must watch rusher QB-HB action until all such action is over. Since the OLJ is the only referee in position to make the call, rusher/QB-HB action is his PRIMARY responsibility - all other responsibilities are secondary. The OLJ must NOT follow the down field flight of the ball; or move from his position; or be concerned with making other calls until his primary responsibilities are over; then assist the sideline call.
 - b. The Defensive Line Judge (DLJ) must line up even with the defensive line ON the sidelines opposite the OLJ.
 - At snap, watch for encroachment, illegal screen of rusher, illegal picks, charging, holding.
 - DLJ is the only referee on his side of the field, therefore, DLJ has sole responsibility of making all calls along his side line.
 - Shall drift down field after snap but must stay ON sideline.
 - Assist on down field calls and, if possible, help out some double pass situations.
 - c. The Defensive Backfield Judge (DBJ) lines up in middle of field at the snap of the ball. He should never let a receiver get behind him.
 - At snap, watch for illegal picks/screens, holding, pass interference, etc.

- Responsible for ALL calls along end line.
 - Responsible for all down field action; should not let any play get past him.
 - On plays near the end zone and on extra point plays, the DBJ lines up on the back line and the middle of the end zone. In this position, the DBJ has the best angle to make the call on any back of the end zone plays.
 - Assist on all other calls whenever possible
- d. If four officials work a game, the positions are: Offensive Back Judge (OBJ), Offensive Line Judge (OLJ), Defensive Line Judge (DLJ), Defensive Back Judge (DBJ).
- NOTE: In four man crews, the OBJ lines up to the DLJ side behind the QB.*
- e. If two referees work a game, the OLJ should assume some of the DLJ responsibilities; the DLJ should assume all the DBJ responsibilities. The two referees line up ON the sidelines but on opposite sides of the field.

F. Leagues

1. **Certification:** All teams and officials in the league must be FFFL certified.
2. **Divisions:** It is not necessary to have separate divisions since the “level” of play for a team may change during the season.
3. **League Director:** The league director is the sole authority on league matters. However, if a league director claims to run a FFFL certified league, it is expected that all FFFL minimum guidelines would be followed. A director of a FFFL certified league who does not abide by FFFL guidelines is subject to a FFFL Flag Football Committee review.

League Director responsibilities are:

- notifying FFFL of the existence of the league
- establishing the protest procedures for that league
- performing all other responsibilities common to running a league
- certification of all teams and officials of the league

G. Tournaments

The Flag Football Series tournament competition officially began with the 1974 State Championships. In that year, and for several years after, the tournament format was a basic single-elimination unseeded event. There was no Consolation Round games, no Mid-Round games and no formally established procedures of any kind. The draw was made according to the

judgment of the local tournament director and the players began to criticize the format. They questioned the local tournament director's "judgment" in determining the draw, disliked the inconsistencies of the local rules and objected to the expense and inconvenience of traveling several hours to participate in an event from which they could be completely knocked out of after just one game. It was evident that some changes had to be made.

The first format change was the addition of the Consolation Brackets, which were only for losers of what are now called Preliminary Round games. This format was followed for several years. However, in the period 1982-1987, a series of format changes were instituted that significantly revised tournament procedures. These changes are as follows:

1982: Game rules/regulations standardized for statewide play; only top 3 teams for District Championships can qualify for State Championships.

1983: Consolation Round expanded to include losers of preliminary and First Full round games - all teams were guaranteed 2 games; top 2 teams from State Qualifier tournaments and top 2 teams from District qualify for State Championships; McNeill Poll invented and tried on an experimental basis.

1984: McNeill Poll implemented; tournament teams are now ranked, all State Ranking tournaments and the State Championships are seeded according to the poll; District Qualifiers replace the District Championships; top 16 ranked teams and top 2 teams from District Qualifiers (DQ) go to State Championships.

1985: Official tournament season dates were set; permanent weekends for District Qualifiers and State Championships established; B level competition guidelines implemented.

1986: Established definite guidelines for all levels of tournament play; all ranking and championship tournaments awarded via bid process; Mid Round brackets added - most tournament teams guaranteed 3 games; top 24 ranked teams and top DQ team qualify for Open State Championships, all other DQ participants qualify for B State Championships.

1987: Rules and info book printed; Only top 24 ranked teams that have at least 3 SRT appearances qualify for Open State Championships; #25-32 ranked teams that have at least 2 SRT appearances and top DQ team qualify for B State Championships.

1988: Top 19 ranked teams (3 SRT minimum) and the winner of the Tallahassee State Qualifier advance to Open State Championships, which was changed to Double Elimination format; #20-35 ranked teams plus the

District Qualifier winner advance to Consolation State Championship.

1990: Open State divided into “A” division teams ranked #1-16 (3 SRT minimum) and “B” division teams ranked #17-32 (3 SRT minimum). Teams ranked 33 and lower as well as non-ranked teams (no minimum SRT) moved to Consolation State Finals.

1996: The State tournament divided to Division I - top 16 ranked teams entered and Division II ranked teams 17 and below, all teams must have a minimum of 4 SRT appearances.

1997: The State Ranking Tournaments (SRT’s) split into two divisions. Each tournament host actually hosted two separate tournaments with prize packages for each. All teams in each division with four SRT’s were invited to participate in the State Tournament.

1999: The SRT divisions are renamed A, B and C divisions. All SRT teams start in one bracket. The first round is now named the A division. All A division losers drop to the C division bracket and winners stay within the A bracket. Six SRT’s are scheduled, with teams required to make four appearances to qualify for the A, B or C State Tournament. The State Tournament is divided up in to 3 divisions based on final rankings and how many teams actually qualify for state. There will be no playing up. A team plays where they are ranked.

2004: The Florida Flag Football League begins management of the Florida Sunshine State Games – Flag Football Series.

1. Florida’s Sunshine State Games State Ranking Tournament

(SRT): The purposes of an SRT is to promote the sport on a statewide level, to provide a competitive outlet for those teams that desire more than local league play and to determine which teams automatically qualify for the State Championships.

- a. A team must be FFFL certified to participate in an SRT.
- b. The entry fee for an SRT is **\$275**. The tournament director may charge an additional \$50 for late registration.
- c. The following trophies/awards must be given out at any SRT: First and second place team trophies for A, B, C and C Consolation divisions and third place team trophies for A division. Individual trophy and/or awards for first place team players of the A, B, C and C Consolation divisions and for the second place team players of the A and B divisions. Actual individual awards (jacket, caps, mugs, trophy) are left to the tournament director’s discretion.
- d. The draw must be seeded according to the latest FFFL rankings. The tournament director must review the brackets with the Flag Football State Director before announcing the draw. To allow out-of-area teams to make necessary plans, the director must

finalize the draw by 12:00 p.m. on the Wednesday before the SRT.

- e. Once an SRT draw is set and game times have been given to even one team, the draw is frozen. If a team then drops out or no-shows, its games will be declared forfeits and its “victorious” opponent will advance to the next round. The only exception to this is that an unranked team may be replaced by another unranked team if the change is made prior to the start of the first game of the SRT, provided the tournament director neither informed the opposing team manager of a possible forfeit situation nor awarded a forfeit victory.
- f. A SRT is a single elimination tournament with 3 consolation brackets (B, C, and C consolation). The various rounds in a SRT are:
 - Round 1- round where #1 seed plays. Losers advance to C division.
 - Round 2 - round immediately after #1 seed plays. Losers advance to C consolation or B division.
 - Round 3 – round immediately after round 2. Round beginning the elimination of 3 loss teams from the tournament from C consolation.
 - Round 4 - round immediately after round 3. Round eliminating 3 loss teams from C consolation and C division.
 - Round 5- round immediately after round 4. Round eliminating 3 loss teams from C consolation, C division, and B division.
 - Round 6 - round immediately after round 5. Round eliminating 3 loss teams from C consolation, C division, B division, and A division. A and C division champions established.
 - Round 7- round immediately after round 6. Round eliminating 3 loss teams from C division, B division, and A division. Divisions B and C consolation division champions established.
- g. There will always be a preliminary round in any SRT that does not have exactly 16 or 32 entries. The various rounds in an SRT without exactly 16 or 32 teams are:
 - Preliminary Round - round prior to #1 seed plays. Losers advance to C division.
 - Round 1 - round where #1 seed plays. Losers advance to C consolation or B division.
 - Round 2 - round immediately after #1 seed plays. Round beginning the elimination of 3 loss teams from the tournament from C consolation.

- Round 3 - round immediately after round 2. Round eliminating 3 loss teams from C consolation and C division.
- Round 4 - round immediately after round 3. Round eliminating 3 loss teams from C consolation, C division, and B division.
- Round 5 - round immediately after round 4. Round eliminating 3 loss teams from C consolation, C division, B division, and A division. A and C division champions established.
- Round 6 - round immediately after round 5. Round eliminating 3 loss teams from C division, B division, and A division. Divisions B and C consolation division champions established.

- h. A team that drops-out of an SRT after 5 p.m. on the Monday following the registration deadline will forfeit the entry fee. This team will receive zero points for the tournament.
- i. A team that forfeits out of a tournament during any round and does not inform the tournament director must pay a \$50.00 fine before being allowed in any other tournament. This team will receive zero points for a no-show.
- j. Insufficient funds payment will result in a \$50 fine. The full payment of entry fees and \$50 fine must be submitted to the SRT before permitted to compete in any other tournament. NOTE: The results of a SRT may not count in the State rankings unless the draw is properly seeded and all Consolation Round and Mid Round brackets are properly filled. All team managers are expected to know the requirements above and to check that the requirements are met before and during the SRT. If the manager believes that one or more requirements are not being met, they should immediately notify the tournament director and the Head Official and/or the Flag Football State Director.

2. Florida's Sunshine State Games State Championships: This tournament determines the final rankings for the current season and Florida's State Champion. Teams are placed into divisions based on final rankings and how many teams participate. There will be no playing up. All teams play where they are ranked.

H. McNeill Poll Ranking System

1. A team earns points by competing in an SRT. The points earned are added to the team's point total for the season. The point total is divided by how many tournaments the team has played in for the current season. Only the top four tournaments will determine a

2. **Point Values:** Point Values for Championship Round Games (First Full, Second, Third/Semi-Final and Final Rounds)
- 2.5 points for a win in the A division
 - 0.5 points for Semi-Final Loser in the A division
 - 0.75 points for Tournament Runner Up in the A division
 - 1.0 points for winning the Championship in the A division
 - 0.75 points for win in B division and preliminary round
 - 0.5 points for win in C division
 - 0.25 points for win in C consolation division

3. **Point Values for State Championships**

A Division

- 4.0 points for each win in the winner's bracket
- 2.5 points for each win in the preliminary and loser's bracket

B Division

- 1.0 points for each win in the winner's bracket
- .75 points for each win in the preliminary and loser's bracket

C Division

- 1.0 points for each win in the winner's bracket
- .50 points for each win in the preliminary and loser's bracket

Note: Preliminary round is defined as a round when the #1 seed is not playing. A forfeit victory counts as if the game was actually played and points are earned accordingly. **In the case of a double forfeit, the Tournament Director will determine the winning team based upon a coin toss. The winner of the coin toss will be considered the winner of the forfeited game. However, both teams will be awarded no points for the forfeited game. See Section III, C.2 for coin toss procedures.**

4. **Rankings:**

- a. Rankings are used to seed every SRT and State Championships.
- b. Rankings for the first tournament played are determined by a team's best four tournaments in last season's series.
- c. AFTER first SRT of the season, rankings from that tournament will decide next tournament seeding.
- d. Anytime a team changes its sponsor or name, the team keeps the ranking it earned under the previous name.
- e. Anytime a team splits up into two or more teams or two teams combine to form one team, the team with the most total active players (7 players minimum) from the previous team keeps the ranking. The other teams are unranked. In rare situations, all such teams might keep the previous ranking or all might be unranked.
- f. A team must play in 4 SRT's to qualify for the State Championships.
- g. The results of the State Championships will be considered the final rankings of that season.

h. Tie Breaker Procedure:

- Head-to-head most recent SRT, work backwards SRT by SRT if needed. It is possible to use head-to-head procedure for more than two tied teams.
- Points earned most recent SRT; work backwards if needed. Points earned by the team that first beat each tied team most recent SRT; work back if needed. Last, a mutually agreed upon solution if approved by FFFL.
- If ranked team does not enter SRT, teams ranked behind advance in same order and are seeded accordingly. (If #1 team does not enter, the #2 team moves up into the #1 seeding, #3 goes to #2...etc.)

SECTION II
RULES AND REGULATIONS

A. Fundamentals

1. Florida Flag Football League (FFFL) flag football rules are comprised of rules from the NFL, NCAA, FHSAA, recreation and intramural programs, and variations of the basketball rules for screening and charging. Just as there are differences in rule interpretations between the NFL, the NCAA and the FHSAA, so there are differences in rule interpretations between those organizations and the FFFL. All rules and situations specifically covered in this rulebook are to be enforced as written, regardless of any other organization's rulings. Any rule or situation not specifically covered herein is to be administered according to current FFFL interpretations. Any other variations from this rulebook are not permitted.
2. **Unsportsmanlike Foul:** An unsportsmanlike foul, similar to a dead ball foul is always enforced from the succeeding spot since it does not affect either the success or failure of a play. It is not part of a double foul.
 - a. If a team commits a live ball foul and an unsportsmanlike foul during the same play, the unsportsmanlike foul is enforced from the succeeding spot as determined by the acceptance or the declination of the live ball foul.
 - b. If a penalty is accepted for an unsportsmanlike foul that occurs during the last timed down of a period, the foul is enforced from the succeeding spot to start the next period or OT period. The period is NOT extended by an untimed down.
 - c. If a team commits a live ball foul and its opponent commits an unsportsmanlike foul during the same play, the live ball foul is administered first then the unsportsmanlike foul is enforced.

3. **Double Fouls:** It is a double foul if BOTH teams commit fouls (other than unsportsmanlike) during the same live ball when:
- There is no change of possession or
 - There is a change of possession and the team in final possession fouls PRIOR to final change of possession or
 - There is change of possession and the team's final possession accepts the penalty for its opponent's foul.

In all 3 above, the penalties cancel, the down is replayed.

4. **Clean Hands Rule:** If both teams foul during a down and there is a change of possession, the team last gaining possession keeps the ball if it fouls AFTER final change of possession and if it declines the penalty for its opponent's live ball foul (Clean Hands Rule).
5. If a team commits more than one live ball foul, only one foul may be enforced. If a team commits more than one live ball and one or more unsportsmanlike fouls, only one live ball foul is enforced and all unsportsmanlike fouls are enforced.
6. If both teams commit one or more live ball fouls and either or both teams commit one or more unsportsmanlike fouls, all live ball fouls cancel, all unsportsmanlike fouls are enforced and the down is replayed.
7. **Fouls During Scoring Plays:**
- a. If the defense fouls (other than an unsportsmanlike foul) during a play that results in a touchdown, the scoring team will not be assessed any additional penalty yardage.
 - b. If either team fouls after a touchdown but before the PAT attempt, the foul is enforced on the next live ball spot.
 - c. If the defense fouls (other than an unsportsmanlike foul) during a successful PAT, the offense may either keep the PAT and enforce the foul on the succeeding next live ball spot or it may accept the penalty yardage and replay the PAT attempt.
 - d. If the offense commits a foul during a PAT, that results in loss of down, the penalty yardage is not enforced.
8. **Fouls in the End Zone:**
- a. Safety: If a foul is committed by the offense and is accepted by the defense and if the foul is enforced from on or behind the offense's goal line.
 - b. If a foul is committed by the defense from on or behind the offense's goal line and is accepted by the offense, it is enforced from the goal line and the ball is placed on the 1 yard line.

9. A penalty enforcement cannot take the ball more than half of the distance from the enforcement spot and the penalized team goal line.
10. Next down and distance is not determined until the ball becomes dead and after any acts (other than non-player or unsportsmanlike fouls) are assessed.
11. A team may accept a penalty to replay a down but, at the same time, decline the penalty yardage involved.
12. **Unfair Acts:**
 - a. No player or non-player may hinder play by an obviously unfair act that has no specific rule coverage.
 - b. No team may repeatedly commit fouls that halve the distance to the goal line.
 - c. No team may commit any act that tends to make a travesty of the game.
 - d. Penalty: Referee enforces any penalty including a score or a forfeit that is deemed appropriate.
13. All-But-One Principle: Whenever the ball is live, all fouls are enforced from the basic spot with the exception of fouls by the offense. Fouls by the offense committed behind the basic spot are enforced from the spot of the foul.

Note: This principle is used because it is always understood that a team is given the yardage it legally gains without the assistance of a foul. ALL levels of football, from pee-wee to professional, use the same fundamental principle for penalty enforcement.

 - a. The BASIC SPOT for a foul during any part of a running play is the spot where the run ended.
 - b. The BASIC SPOT for a loose ball play is the previous spot (the spot where the ball was last snapped or free kicked).
 - c. To properly enforce a live ball penalty, determine where the foul occurs, when the foul occurs and what kind of play occurs.
14. If an offensive penalty occurs on the last play of half or game, the half or game is over. If a defensive penalty occurs on the last play of half or game, penalty will be assessed and one untimed down will occur.

B. Game Basics

1. **Playing Field:** Field is 100 yards long x 40 yards wide playing area which includes two - 10 yard end zones at each end. The playing area is divided into 20 yard sections by first down lines drawn across the width of the field with hash marks at the 5 yard and 10 yard line for extra points. It is recommended that team security boxes (40 yards long x 4 yards wide) be drawn adjacent to the playing area. Only rostered players and team managers are allowed in this area. The entire field will be marked every 5 yards in the middle of the field and both side lines.

2. **Playing Time:**
 - a. Four 12-minute quarters, with 5 minutes between halves.
 - b. The clock runs continuously during the game but it ALWAYS stops for a time-out, an injury or any scoring play.
 - c. During the last 2 minutes of either half, the clock ALWAYS stops for a time-out, an injury, any scoring play, a punt, a first down, a penalty, an incomplete pass, change of possession or out-of-bounds play.
 - d. There will be 40 seconds between plays, beginning with the end of the previous play. This includes scoring plays. The interval between plays is 25 seconds when there is an action by the official such as a team time out, penalty assessment or official time out. The ready-for-play whistle will be blown on all plays.
Penalty: Delay of game 5 yards and repeat the down.

3. **Stopping/Starting the Clock:** When a touchdown or safety is scored, the clock stops immediately and does NOT run during the PAT. The clock remains stopped and does not start until the ball is:
 - a. Snapped on ensuing play by offense.
 - b. For a safety caught or muffed in playing area by the receiving team. However, the clock starts on the snap from the center if the freekick is fair-caught by the receiving team, downed by the kicking team, goes out-of-bounds, rolls through the end zone, or comes to a stop anywhere on the playing field without being touched by the receiving team.
 - c. In punting situations, during the last 2 minutes of either half, when a delay of game penalty has been called against the punting team, the above procedure applies.
 - d. During the last 2 minutes of either half:
 - If the clock stops for a first down, penalty or injury, it restarts on the referee's ready-for-play whistle.
 - If the clock stops for an out-of-bounds play, change of possession, incomplete pass or time-out, the clock restarts on the next center snap.

4. **Timeout:** Each team has two (2) 1-minute timeouts each half. Unused timeouts may not be carried over into the next half or into any overtime period. There is an automatic 1-minute timeout at the 2-minute warning of either half. This timeout is considered an official's timeout and is not charged to either team. An official's timeout may never be called for equipment repair or to bring in a ball.

5. **Forfeit time:** In tournament play, game time is forfeit time. Local league directors may establish their own forfeit time procedure.

6. **First down:** A first down is gained when the offense moves the ball

across the appropriate 20 yard marker in four or less legal downs.

7. **Number of Players:** A team fields a maximum of seven (7) players at a time. A team must field seven (7) players to begin any tournament game. A team must field six (6) players to begin a league game or to continue playing in any league or tournament game. A team automatically forfeits when it can only field five (5) or less players at a time during any game in progress.
8. All team players, coaches, managers and fans on the sidelines must stay between the 20 yard lines.
9. **Scoring:**
 - 6 points - Touchdown
 - 2 points - Safety
 - 2 points - Extra point (PAT) - a successful PAT from the 10 yard line
 - 1 points - Extra point (PAT) - a successful PAT from the 5 yard line
 - 2 points - PAT attempt is intercepted and returned for a score by the defensive team.

Extra Points - Two-point conversions will be attempted from the 10 yard line. One-point conversions will be attempted from the 5 yard line. Teams will be able to alter their choice any time within the time between plays (40 seconds). Teams may also alter their choice if a penalty is assessed. The penalty is assessed from the spot at which the offensive team selects which PAT they are going to attempt.

Pass Interference - If pass interference occurs in the end zone during a PAT attempt, the succeeding spot will be the 1 yard line if attempting for one point or the 6 yard line if attempting for two points.

Example: A team attempts a one point conversion from the 5 yard line. During the play the defense commits a penalty. The offense may now decide to go for the two point conversion from the 5 yard line (half the distance penalty), the 1 yard line (pass interference penalty), the 10 yard line (accept the penalty - decline the yardage), or they can decide to go for a one point conversion from the 2 ½ yard line (half the distance penalty), the 5 yard line (accept the penalty - decline the yardage) or from the 1 yard line (pass interference penalty).

10. **17 Point Rule:** When a team leads by 17 or more points at or anytime after the two-minute warning of the second half, the game ends immediately and that team automatically wins.
11. **Overtime:** A coin toss determines possession. The captain of the team in possession of the ball at the end of regulation calls the coin

toss. The winner has a choice of offense or defense or to defend a goal. Offense puts ball in play from the defense 20 yard line and has four downs to score. Touchdowns, PAT, and safeties count as usual. Change of possession occurs when the offense scores a TD and tries a PAT or turns the ball over on downs or if it throws an interception. The defense may not advance an interception; the ball is dead. After the offense ends its possession, the team on defense gets possession and puts the ball in play from same 20 yard line. There is not an extra benefit if a team scores in fewer downs than the other. ALL penalties are enforced as usual including loss of down and automatic first down penalties. Each team has only ONE time-out per OT period. Unused time-outs from the second half or a previous OT period may not be carried over. There is no time limit in the OT procedure; however, the offense has the usual 40 seconds from the ready-to-play whistle to put the ball in play in order to avoid a 5-yard delay of game penalty. If the score is tied after the first OT, the loser of first OT coin toss gets choice of offense or defense or to defend a goal and the second OT period then begins. The OT procedure continues in like fashion through as many periods that are needed to break the tie.

Examples of Overtime Situations:

- a. Score is tied 20-20 at end of regulation; Team A has first possession and scores on 2nd down and makes PAT; Team B scores on its 4th down and makes PAT.
Result: Score is 27-27 and game goes into 2nd OT period. Team B gets choice of offense/defense/choice of goals. If Team B (on offense) scores and misses its PAT and Team A throws an interception, the game is over and Team B wins 33-27 in double OT.
- b. Score is tied 20-20. Team A (on offense first) scores a TD and makes it's PAT; Team B scores and makes a two point PAT. However, during the PAT play, Team B is called for flag guarding at the two yard line.
Result: Since all penalties are enforced as usual and since the penalty for flag guarding is 10 yards from POI and down counts, Team B's two point PAT is not allowed and Team B does not get another try. Team A wins 27-26.

C. Kick-offs

1. Kick-offs will take place only at the start of the first and second halves. After a score, the opposing team will take possession on their 20 yard line (exception: *FFFL Section III, C8a*).
2. Coin toss precedes the game. In tournament play, the team with the better ranking calls the toss. The winner of the toss has choice to

defend a goal, to receive, to kick-off or to defer choice of options to second half. If the choice is to defer, the loser of the toss has choice to defend a goal, to receive or to kick-off to start the game. In tournament play, if both teams are unranked, the team that traveled the farthest to the tournament calls the toss. Coin toss procedure for league games is determined by the league director.

3. The kicking team kicks off from their 20 yard line except by penalty or designating the ball downed at its 20 yard line. The kicker will kick any regulation ball that belongs to the team. The ball must be kicked off of either a tee or the ground only.
4. **Out-of-bounds:** Out-of-bounds kick-offs are not re-kicked. If the kick-off goes out-of-bounds, the receiving team will choose to put the ball in play either from its 30 yard line or from the yard line where the ball went out-of-bounds. If a penalty occurred which resulted in the kicking team kicking from behind the 20 yard line, the receiving team may take the ball at the spot it went out-of-bounds or at the 30 plus the penalty yardage.
5. **On-side Kicks:** There are no on-side kicks. However, the kicking team may down the kick-off once the ball hits the ground. The ball would be dead at the spot and would belong to the receiving team. The clock would not start until the center snap.
6. **Position of Receiving Team:** The receiving team must have three (3) players on the 40 yard line (or 20 yards from the kicking team when the ball is moved by penalty enforcement) until the kick is made.
7. **The Kick-off Returner:**
 - May advance a ball that is caught on the fly, picked up on a bounce or rolled to a stop but has not yet been downed by an opponent.
 - May advance a kick-off that is fielded in the end zone.
 - May advance a ball that is touched or muffed by a teammate, but is caught before it hits the ground. However, if a ball is muffed by the receiving team and is caught before it hits the ground by the kicking team, the ball is dead at the spot of the catch and belongs to the kicking team.
 - May not advance a muffed ball that hits the ground. The ball is dead at the spot where it first hit the ground.
8. **Kick-off Situations**
 - a. **Twenty Yard Line Rule:** A team may select to place the ball on their 20 yard line in lieu of kicking the ball off. Once a team

selects this option, that team loses the ability to kick off for the rest of the game. All future opportunities to kick off must be placed on their twenty yard line. Therefore, any penalty assessed before the kickoff will follow the same rule. A penalty against the kicking team is assessed from that team's 20 yard line. Any penalty against the opponents is also assessed from the kicking team's 20 yard line. Either opponent may decline the yardage.

NOTE: *All kicks must travel at least one full rotation. It is possible to kick the ball forward and have it roll backwards behind or onto the twenty yard line. This is legal.*

b. The Returner:

- Standing on the 40 yard line, muffs the kick and the ball first hits on the KICKING team's 38 yard line.
Result: Receiving team ball on the 40 yard line; clock starts on the ready-for-play whistle.
- Standing on the 20 yard line, muffs the kick and the ball first hits on his 12 yard line.
Result: Receiving team ball on its 12 yard line; clock starts on the ready-for-play whistle.
- Standing on the 5 yard line, muffs the kick and the ball first hits out-of-bounds at the 4 yard line.
Result: Receiving team ball on the 4 yard line; clock starts on the center snap.
- Standing on his 5 yard line, muffs the kick and the ball first hits in the end zone.
Result: Touchback (not a safety) receiving team ball on its 20 yard line; clock starts on the center snap.
- Standing on or behind team's goal line, muffs the kick and the ball first hits on the 3 yard line.
Result: Touchback, receiving team ball on its 20 yard line; clock starts on the center snap.
- Standing on or behind team's goal line, cleanly fields the kick and EITHER drops the ball and the ball lands in the end zone OR is "tackled" in the end zone.
Result: In both situations, it is a touchback. Receiving team ball on its 20 yard line; clock starts on the center snap.
- Standing on or behind team's goal line, cleanly fields the kick but drops the ball and the ball first lands on the 2 yard line.
Result: Touchback, receiving team ball on the 20 yard line; clock starts on the center snap.
- Standing on the 2 yard line, cleanly catches the kick and EITHER goes into the end zone where he is "tackled" OR somehow drops the ball and the ball first lands in the end

zone.

Result: In both situations, it is a safety. The returner's team puts ball in play by kicking or punting from its 20 yard line; clock starts when touched by receiving team.

D. Offense

1. All offensive players must be within 20 yards of the ball by ready-for-play whistle.
2. A team may run a "no huddle" offense and does not need to notify officials or opponents that they are doing so.
3. The offense may have any number of players on the LOS when the ball is snapped. No player on the LOS may simulate any action that would cause any defensive encroachment at the time of the snap.
Penalty: (for simulating action): play is dead; 5 yards; same down.
4. The offense may intentionally spike the ball to stop the clock but, may not do so to avoid a sack. Ball must go past LOS and within 5 yards of receiver. Penalty: Intentional Grounding- 10 yards point of infraction.
5. Any number of players may move, shift, or go in motion prior to the snap. However, all players except one must be in a non-moving set position for a least one second prior to snap. The one player in motion at the snap of the ball must be at least one yard from the LOS and the motion must be parallel to or away from the LOS.
Penalty (for all above): play continues; 5 yards; same down.
6. All snaps must begin with the ball on the ground and between the center's legs. A snap that hits the ground (bad snap) once it has been snapped is dead at the spot where the ball first hits. A snap not starting in the proper position will result in a replay of the down. A bad snap never stops the clock. The center may receive a hand-off if the center is at least one yard behind the LOS when the hand-off is made. All snaps must occur within 5 yards of the center of the field.
7. **Passes:**
 - a. Unlimited number of forward passes, and/or forward hand-offs are permitted behind LOS.
 - b. Once the ball crosses the LOS, it may not be passed, or handed-off in a forward direction from anywhere on the field.
 - c. Unlimited number of legal laterals, pitches, and hand-offs are permitted anywhere on the field.
 - d. No player, with or without the ball, may cross over the LOS,

come back behind LOS, and then throw a forward pass.
Penalty (for all above): play continues; 5 yards; next down.

8. **Eligible Receivers:** All offensive players are eligible receivers. Two or more offensive players may consecutively touch a ball that is legally passed, pitched, lateraled or handed-off.
9. **In-bounds:** A player must land with FIRST foot in-bounds for a legal catch; a player who straddles or touches a sideline or end line at time of the catch is out-of-bounds. A player who dives and makes a catch must make first contact in-bounds with any body part for a legal catch.
10. **Ground Catch:** A player who kneels (one or both knees), sits or is laying down on the field may legally catch a ball as long as no body part is out-of-bounds. The ball would be dead at the spot of catch.
11. **Illegal Participation:** An offensive player who voluntarily or accidentally steps out-of-bounds may not touch or catch a pass or participate at all in the play.

Penalty: Illegal Participation; play continues; 10 yards LOS; next down.

NOTE: *A player who is forced out-of-bounds may return in-bounds to touch or catch a pass.*

12. The Ball Carrier may not:

- Stiff arm, slap at, push away or duck head into any defender
- Shield flagbelt or flags in any manner
- Spinning is allowed
- Extend the ball in any unnatural manner in an attempt to gain any additional yardage
- Penalty (for all above): Play continues; 10 yards; from spot of infraction; next down.

13. A ball carrier who touches the ground with any body part other than a hand or foot is immediately down at that spot. An attempt to waste time off the clock by stopping forward progress, the play will be blown dead at that point.

14. **Offensive Charging:** Offensive charging occurs when an offensive player runs into any defensive player. A ball carrier must attempt to avoid contact with a defender.

Penalty: Play continues; 10 yards; from spot of infraction, next down,

NOTE: *Accidental brushing/bumping and unavoidable contact is not considered as charging.*

15. Hurdling/Jumping:

- a. The ball carrier may hurdle or jump anywhere on the field, but will be penalized for charging if they initiate contact with a defender who established position prior to the hurdle/ jump.
- b. A defender who initiates contact with a ball carrier, who is in the air as a result of a hurdle/jump attempt, will be penalized for charging, unnecessary roughness, or unsportsmanlike conduct, upon the referee's discretion.

16. Fumble: A fumble or dropped ball that lands even with or behind a ball carrier is dead at the spot where it first hits the ground and belongs to the team that last had possession, unless:

- a. The ball lands on or behind that team's goal line
RULING: A safety would be charged.
- b. The ball lands on or behind the opponent's goal line
RULING: a touchback occurs, opponent's ball on its 20 yard line.
- c. The ball is fumbled on a 4th down play that does not result in a 1st down.

17. Forward Fumble/Muff: A forward fumble and/or a forwardly dropped ball or a forwardly muffed ball that is not caught on the fly by an opponent is dead when it hits the ground. The ball is marked for play at the spot where the ball carrier lost control of the ball unless *FFFL Sec III, D16b* applies.

18. A ball carrier may not intentionally throw, pitch, toss, etc. the ball out-of-bounds in an attempt to stop the clock inside the **FINAL 2 min/** half.

Penalty: Player is considered "tackled" at the spot, clock does not automatically stop; usual 2 minute procedure applies, no yardage penalty, next down.

19. Screen Blocking: Screen blocking is permitted. The "block" must be STATIONARY and must be SET at least two running strides (4 yards) from an opponent. The "blocker" may not extend or stick-out a knee, hip, shoulder, leg or foot when "blocking". The "blocker" may not lean into or initiate contact with a defender. The arms must be kept straight down along the "blockers" body and the "blocker's" feet may only be in contact with the ground when "blocking".

- a. An offensive player may not run a pattern in front of or interfere in any way with the rusher (s) path to the ball.
- b. Moving screens and any other types of blocking are not permitted.
- c. For all short rush situations, in addition to *FFFL Sec III,19* (all above), the center and any offensive player lined up within 2 yards of center may not move in any direction behind the LOS

that impedes, interferes with or cuts off the rusher's direct line to the ball carrier.

Penalty for all above: play continues; 10 yards from spot of infraction; next down.

E. Punts

1. The offense must notify the referee of its decision to punt and complete the punt within the 30 seconds after the ready for play whistle.

Penalty: Delay of game; ball is dead; 5 yards.

2. Once the punt is announced, the offense lines up in any legal formation and waits for the referee's signal to begin the play. The center must legally snap the ball to the punter. No part of the punter's body may cross the line when punting. The punting team may not move down field until the punt is away. The defense must have three men on its restraining line. The defense may not rush the punt.

Penalty (for all): ball is dead; 5 yards.

3. Inside final 2 minutes of each half, the clock is stopped immediately once the punt is announced. To restart clock, refer to *FFFL Section III, B3*.
4. The offense may change its mind to punt or not to punt without penalty provided that *FFFL Section III, E1* is met and provided that *FFFL Section III, E4a* does not apply.

Since the clock is stopped immediately for punting situations inside the final two (2) minutes of a half and to prevent the offense from gaining a possible unfair time advantage, the offense may not change its decision to punt unless the offense calls a time-out, unless the offense takes a 5 yard penalty (clock restarts on ready-for-play signal) or unless there is a defensive foul prior to the punt.

5. **Quick kicks:** Quick kicks are illegal.
Penalty: Delay of game 5 yards and repeat the down.
6. Downing a punt: refer to *FFFL Sec III, C* (when applicable).
7. Returning a punt: refer to *FFFL Sec III, C* (when applicable).
8. Since the punting procedure in flag football differs greatly from that of all levels of tackle, the referees must ensure that team does not try to gain an unfair time advantage in punt situations. The referees have the option to:
 - stop or start the clock as appropriate
 - assess a delay of game penalty

- assess an unsportsmanlike penalty or any combination of these options

F. **Defense**

1. **Restraining Line:** The defensive restraining line is 5 yards in front of the ball. However, if the ball is less than 5 yards from a designed 1st down line or the defense's goal line, the restraining line is half of the distance between the ball and that line.

- On a 1 point PAT, the goal line is the defensive restraining line.
- On a 2 point PAT, the 5 yard line is the defensive restraining line.

2. A defensive player may not lean over or cross the restraining line until the ball is snapped.

Penalty: Play is dead; 5 yards.

3. **Blocker:** A defensive player

- Must go around a legal screen blocker.
- May use hands only to maintain balance while going around blocker.
- May not push, pull, grab, initiate contact with a legal screen blocker or charge into a legal blocker.

Penalty: The play continues; 10 yards.

4. **Defensive Charging:** A rusher who does NOT follow a direct line to the ball at the time of the snap may NOT cut diagonally in front of, collide with or interfere with an offensive player.

Penalty: Defensive Charging; play continues; 10 yards, same down

NOTE: *This rule does NOT replace any part of the Offensive Screening Rule in FFFL Section III, D. This rule works in CONJUNCTION with that rule. The reason for this rule is that a rusher would line up to the left of the center and at the time of snap would rush straight to the right of the center for no reason other than to draw a foul to the right of the center. This is especially the case in Short Rush Situations.*

5. **Roughing the Passer:** A defender may not rough the passer, defined as when a defender makes any contact with the passer before, during, or after the actual pass attempt.

Penalty:

With or without contact of ball - 5 yards; automatic first down.
Avoidable, intentional, flagrant - 15 yards; automatic first down.

6. A defender - under no circumstances - may not trip, "chuck", charge into or detain any player in any way

Penalty: 10 yards. Referee may assess unnecessary roughness, unsportsmanlike penalty or any other penalty deemed appropriate.

7. **Pass Interference:** Pass interference (defense) occurs only if the ball is in the air. If the ball is clearly uncatchable and the contact is not unsportsmanlike or unnecessary no penalty will be called. Any contact with head of player is considered unnecessary.
(Referee's Discretion) Pass interference cannot occur behind LOS.
8. **Shielding** - Hindering an opponent's vision without making an attempt to catch, intercept or bat the ball is pass interference even though no contact was made.
Penalty: Defensive - automatic first down at POI; if defensive in end zone automatic first down at one yard line. Offensive - 10 yards LOS; next down.
9. **Interception:** A defender who intercepts in the end zone may either down or advance the ball. *FFFL Section III, 8b* will apply except the clock would start on the center snap only if it is within 2 minutes of a half.
10. **Tackle:** A flagpull is made when a defender detaches a ball carriers flagbelt. The ball is dead and spotted where the ball carriers belt is when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is or the flag lands. If the flagbelt becomes detached but doesn't fall off for several yards the ball is marked at the spot of the initial pull. For a 1st down or score, both the ball and flags must break the plane of the line.
11. If a flagbelt is detached - but not cleanly pulled off - by a defender and does not fall to the ground for several yards, the ball is marked at the spot of the initial pull.
12. A defender may jump or dive to grab a flagbelt. Defenders may leave their feet for any reason as long as they do not initiate contact with an offensive player.
Penalty: Referee may assess charging penalty, unnecessary roughness penalty, unsportsmanlike penalty or gross unsportsmanlike penalty for any aggressive contact, defense or offense.
13. A defender must one-hand touch anywhere to "tackle" a ball carrier who is not wearing a flagbelt.
14. A defender may not hold or grab any part of a ball carrier's body or uniform or detain a ball carrier by any physical contact when "tackling" except when *FFFL Section II, D* applies.
Penalty: Play continues, 10 yards. Referee may opt to award TD.
15. **Contact with the Ball Carrier:** A defender may not push or tackle a ball carrier.
Penalty - Pushing; unsportsmanlike penalty or automatic 1st down.
In both situations, the referee has option to award TD (if deemed

appropriate) and/or to eject defender.

- 16. Stripping:** Once a ball carrier clearly has possession of the ball, the defender may not punch, hit or make a play for the ball.

Penalty: Play continues; stripping - 10 yards; same down.

- 17.** A defender may not detach the flagbelt off of any offensive player who clearly does not have possession of the ball.

Penalty: Play continues; 10 yards from end of play; player risks being ejected if repeatedly commits foul.

- 18. Contact:** Contact by the defender against a receiver without the ball and before the ball is thrown will be penalized.

Penalty: 5 yards and automatic 1st down.

G. Miscellaneous Rules and Regulations

- 1. Unsportsmanlike Fouls:** Unsportsmanlike fouls cover a variety of infractions. The unsportsmanlike foul also covers any action that tends to make a travesty of the game and also any regular or repeated penalty that is judged by the referee to be intentional or avoidable.

Penalty: The minimum penalty yardage for any unsportsmanlike foul is 15 yards from the succeeding spot. However, the referee has the option to assess any amount of additional penalty yardage, to award a replay of the down, an automatic 1st down, TD, a forfeit, to eject any individual from the area or to combine any of these options.

The infractions below are penalized as **unsportsmanlike fouls:**

- a. No player may verbally or physically taunt or threaten a referee or an opponent. This includes jeering at, pointing at, shaking a ball at, etc. any individual.
- b. No individual may threaten to punch or to inflict bodily harm towards any individual.
- c. No individual may use loud or excessive or abusive profane language regardless if the language is directed at another individual or not.
- d. Spiking the ball and/or end zone displays (group high fives, etc) are not permitted.

NOTE: SEE PREVIOUS SECTIONS FOR OTHER UNSPORTSMANLIKE LIKE FOULS.

- 2. Profanity:** Teams will be warned before the game on the use of profanity.

- a. Any profanity directed at a player, spectator, official or member

of the tournament staff will, at a minimum, result in ejection from the rest of the game/tournament with **NO** exceptions. There may be additional action taken upon review of the Flag Football Committee.

- b. Profanity that is not directed at anyone will be penalized as follows:
 - 1st and 2nd offense: 15 yard unsportsmanlike conduct.
 - 3rd offense: Player removed for the remainder of the game. Participant will be eligible to return to the next game.

3. **Gross Unsportsmanlike Fouls:** These cover any serious, abusive and/or flagrant infractions. These infractions include repeated penalties of any type. The referee has the option to assess an unsportsmanlike foul as a gross unsportsmanlike foul.

Penalty: The minimum amount of penalty yardage will be half the distance to the goal plus an automatic 1st down and ejection of individual(s) involved.

The infractions below are penalized as gross unsportsmanlike fouls:

- a. No individual may strike or inflict bodily harm to any other individual.
 - b. No player under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs may participate in any league or tournament game.
 - c. Any type of infraction as deemed appropriate by the referees.
4. **Disciplinary Action:** Any individual or team ejected from an FFFL sanctioned tournament is subject to a FFFL State Flag Football Committee review. The Committee will hear all sides of an issue before making its decision. Disciplinary action (probation and/or suspension from any FFFL sanctioned event - flag football or any other) may be taken against any individual or team.
 5. Every player on the field must wear a properly secured flagbelt at the start of the play.
Penalty: Play continues; 5 yards; illegal procedure.
 6. **Unlimited Substitution: Permitted anytime the ball is not in play, but not after the huddle breaks. The huddle may only break with 7 players. If a no huddle offense is being run, all substitutions must be made prior to approaching the line of scrimmage.**
Penalty: Play continues; 5 yards; illegal procedure.
 7. **Inadvertent Quick Whistle:** When the referee blows the whistle before a play actually ends, the team in possession of the ball at the time of the quick whistle has the option of either keeping the yardage gained up to the point of the quick whistle or of returning the ball to

the previous spot and replaying the down.

- a. In the event of a pass or of a kick that is in the air at the time of the quick whistle, the ball is dead and returned to the previous spot and the down is replayed.
- b. The referee may award a touchdown if he judges that a ball carrier would have scored had the quick whistle not occurred.

8. Encroachment: If the offense encroaches before the snap or if the kicking team encroaches before the kick, the ball is dead immediately and a 5 yard penalty is assessed.

9. Punt Receiving: If a defensive player makes an over-the-shoulder type catch of a punt inside the 5 yard line while running full speed towards the end zone and their momentum carries them into the end zone where the ball is downed, the ball would be placed at the spot of the catch. This would also be true if the player maintains possession of the ball but is carried out of bounds behind the goal line due to momentum.

If in the above situation,

- a. The player tries to run out of the end zone but is “tackled” in the end zone, the ball is still returned to the spot of the catch.
- b. The player tries to run out of the end zone and crosses the goal line, the ball would be marked at the spot where the player would be “tackled”.
- c. The referees judge that the player’s momentum did not carry him into the end zone but judge instead that the player could have avoided entering the end zone, a safety would be charged.

10. Contact: Incidental, accidental and unavoidable contact occurs in flag football. The referees will use discretion in assessing fouls.

11. Force: When a player’s action causes the initial movement of the ball. The term *force* is used in connection with the goal line and the direction from the field of play into the end zone. By establishing the force that causes a ball to enter the end zone (where it is downed), it can be determined if the ball is to be marked for a touchback, a safety, or a touchdown, etc.

12. Protests: A protest may only be filed to question a rule interpretation. A judgment call may never be protested. In tournament play, a protest call must be resolved as quickly as possible. A protest upheld well after the fact not only results in the hassle of resuming the game in question sometime later in the tournament, but also causes a variety of logistical and operational problems (changing results, redoing draws, rescheduling or replaying games) throughout the rest of the tournament. In addition, the time available to complete a tournament is limited enough without having

to allow for protest problems.

Every reasonable effort to avoid a protest situation will be made by trying to settle a problem on the spot.

- The game will be stopped by an official's time-out.
- The protesting captain will state his case and will be prepared to show which rule supports his claim.
- The game referees will make their decision.
- If the captain is not satisfied, he will file a protest and submit a \$50 protest fee to FFFL.
- The Protest Committee will meet and hear the protest on the spot.

Although this procedure causes some inconvenience, protests are quite rare. Further, if the situation goes this far, it is usually serious enough to warrant the inconvenience. The few minutes required to solve the issue on the spot could save a lot of time and troubles for others in the future.

- If the protest is disallowed, the protesting captain's team will be charged with a time-out and forfeit the protest fee.
- If the captain accepted the game referee's decision and declines to file a protest, his team will be charged with a time-out to replace the official's time-out used to stop the game. If the team is out of time-outs, it would be charged with a delay of game penalty.

The Protest Committee at an SRT or State Championship Tournament is comprised of :

- The Head Official
- The Assistant Head Official (if applicable)
- The Tournament Director.

Note: No member of the Protest Committee may be a member of the officiating crew for the game in question. If this is the case, the Tournament Director will select an officials representative to serve on the committee. The Tournament Director is not permitted to be a rostered player of any participating team.

A majority vote settles the issue.

Protest procedures for league games are established by the respective directors.

H. Rules Summary

Previous Spot: The spot where the ball was last snapped; line of

scrimmage spot where the ball was last kicked-off.

Succeeding Spot: The spot where the ball is next snapped or kicked-off.

Tipped Ball: A receiver is down (tackled) when, upon catching the ball, his flagbelt is detached. A defender may pull the flag of an offensive receiver once initial contact with the ball occurs. A receiver who first tips the ball before maintaining possession is down where the flag pull occurred.

Spot of Foul: Whenever the ball is live, all fouls are enforced from the basic spot. Fouls committed by the offense behind the basic spot are enforced from the spot of the foul.

Basic Spot:

- Loose Ball Play: The basic spot on a loose ball play is the previous spot. A loose ball play includes all action from the time of the snap until a legally thrown ball is caught, intercepted or incomplete.
- The basic spot on a running play is the end of the run. A running play includes any run or scramble behind the LOS in which the ball carrier does not throw a pass or pitch; or beyond when beyond the LOS, any run and / or action during any part of a run after a catch of a pass, kick or punt.

Kick-Offs and Punts: Any action before the catch is part of a loose ball play. Any action after the catch is part of a running play.

CHARGING, Defense

Play continues
10 yards, same down

CHARGING, Offense

Play continues
10 yards, loss of down

DELAY OF GAME

5 yards, Replay Down

DIVING

Play continues
10 yards, loss of down

DUCKING HEAD INTO DEFENDER

Play continues
10 yards loss of down

ENCROACHMENT

Defense
5 yards (play is dead)

EXTENDING BALL FROM BODY

Play continues
10 yards, loss of down

FLAG GUARDING

Play continues
10 yards, loss of down

GROSS UNSPORTSMANLIKE FOUL

½ distance to goal succeeding spot

Auto ejection of individual

HOLDING, Defense (on ball carrier)

Play continues
10 yards, same down

ILLEGAL CONTACT, Defense (w/o ball)

Play continues
5 yards, LOS, automatic 1st

ILLEGAL MOTION

Play continues
5 yards

ILLEGAL PASS

Play continues
5 yards, loss of down

ILLEGAL PROCEDURE

Play continues
5 yards

ILLEGAL SCREEN

Play continues
10 yards, loss of down

OFFSIDES

Offense on kick-off or snap
5 yards (play is dead)

PASS INTERFERENCE, Defense

Play continues
Auto 1st at spot of foul

PASS INTERFERENCE, Defense in end zone

Auto 1st at 1 yd line

PASS INTERFERENCE, Defense in end zone during PAT

1 Point Attempt– Ball spotted on 1 yard line, new attempt

2 Point Attempt– Ball spotted on 6 yard line, new attempt

PASS INTERFERENCE, Offense

10 yards, LOS, loss of down

ROUGHING THE PASSER

With or without touching ball
5 yards succeeding spot, automatic 1st

Flagrant

15 yards succeeding spot, automatic first

Stripping

10 yards from spot of foul

TACKLING

Play continues
½ distance to goal/auto 1st
TD given at referee option

UNSPORTSMANLIKE FOUL

15 yards

Flagrant

15 yards succeeding spot

UNNECESSARY ROUGHNESS

Play continues
15 yards
Flagrant
Play Continues, 15 yards automatic 1st

NOTE: Referees have option to assess any penalty yardage, toward automatic 1st or TD or forfeit, to eject individual for any unnecessary roughness or unsportsmanlike foul or

SECTION V
DIAGRAMS

