



Catholic Youth Organization
- Central Texas -
Athletic Bylaws
Flag Football



General

Players

Two (2) Teams, each having five (5) players on the field at a time. A minimum of four (4) players to avoid forfeit.

Time Outs

Each team has two (2) timeouts per half, one (1) minute each (none carry over). One (1) T.O. for overtime

Format

Two halves are divided by a five (5) minute halftime. Each half is eighteen (18) minutes (running clock) followed by seven (7) plays.

Clock

Clock stops for time-outs and injuries (and official's discretion).

Coin Toss

The visiting team makes the call. Winner of toss to decide possession (Ball, Defend, or Defer). The loser of the toss decides the direction. There is an automatic change of direction at the Half.

Placement of the Ball After Score/No Kick Off

After one team scores, the opposing team will start with the ball at their own 20 yard line with the 40 yard line as the line to gain. There will be no official kick off.

Safety

Players will not dive at any point, except to catch a live ball in the air.

Equipment & Playing Field

The Ball

It is required that 1st/2nd and 3rd/4th graders play with a "pee wee" size football. The ball will be leather or synthetic leather. The offense will always be allowed to use their own football. Coaches can decide to use the same ball for both teams.

Uniforms

Jerseys/shirts: Teams will have shirts/jerseys that match. Jerseys should be contrasting in color to the opposing team. Pinnies should be worn if needed. The visiting team will wear pinnies provided by CYO CTX. All shirts/jerseys MUST be tucked in (excluding short cut) and not covering any part of the flag.

Shorts: Shorts must NOT have pockets and must be of a contrasting color to the flags worn.

General: No jewelry, casts/splints (except finger splints with all metal covered), baseball caps, helmets, or metal braces.



Shoes: All players must have either flat soled or soft soled soccer/football type cleats; no metal cleats. All cleats must be less than ½ inch.

Flags: Players are required to wear a one-piece belt with two SONIC flags (suction type). This belt must be worn snugly around the waist with a flag on each hip. The flags MUST be at least 12 inches in length and free from any obstruction. The 12 inch length does not include the “hitch/plastic” portion. Flags must be unaltered in any way (except cut to legal length). Flags must be in good shape (not torn or tattered) and cannot be rolled/curled in any way. If a player receives the ball and is wearing one flag, no flags, or is wearing the flags incorrectly, the player will be downed where he/she receives the ball.

- Note: If any player has improper equipment/attire, said player may not play in the game until he/she is in compliance with the rules. If discovered during the game, this constitutes a uniform violation for the offending team (5 yards penalty).

Face Shields

Players are allowed to wear masks or gaiters as personal protective equipment during games if desired. Face shields are not allowed.

This is to protect against the sharp edge and incidental contact, both for the player wearing the shield and the opponents.

Field or Playing Area

Markings

Full Field: The field shall be a rectangular area 100 yards long by 40/45 yards wide. This area will be divided into 8 zones (including end zones). Respective lines to gain for a 1st down should be 10 yd line, 20 yd line, 40 yd line, 20 yd line, 10 yd line. The end zones will be 10 yards deep and the field should have a total of 6 zones that are 10 yards deep (including end zones) and 2 zones that are 20 yards deep. The sidelines and end lines are out of bounds. The entire width of each goal line shall be part of the end zone.

- **Exceptions to field dimensions must be approved by CYO CTX Executive Directors.**

Short Field: 1st/2nd grades will always play on the short field rules. In the event there is a short field that has a playable width, games may be played for 3rd/4th grades. The Executive Directors will decide if teams will need to go one direction only or if playing both directions is suitable. Yard to gain lines will be determined prior to competition.

Short Field One Direction Rules:

- Line of Scrimmage at start of game and after scores:
 - The starting line of scrimmage is as close to the 40 yard line as possible. Respective lines to gain for 1st down will be the 30 yd line, 20 yd line, 10 yd line. The one end zone will be 10 yards deep. The sidelines and end lines are out of bounds. The entire width of each goal line shall be part of the end zone.
- Punting:



Game Play

Start of Game

There will be no kickoff. After each score the ball will be placed on the offense's own designated starting yard line. On a full size field it would be the 20 yard line.

Length of game

Periods: The game shall be played in two halves, 18 minutes in length. In all games the clock will run continuously unless stopped by the referee for an injury or time out. At the end of the 18 minutes, the referee will inform both teams that the 7 play period has begun. Extra points will not count as a play. Punts will count unless they are on play #7 and the return did not result in a touchdown.

Play clock: When the referee declares the ball ready for play (whistle blows), the offense has 25 seconds to put the ball into play (snap).

Halftime: will last 5 minutes.

Timeouts: Each team will be given 2 timeouts per half (cannot be carried to the second half or overtime). Timeouts will be 1 minute in length. Each team will be allowed 1 timeout during overtime. Timeouts can be called by players on the field or coaches. A team may call a timeout to change their option on a P.A.T or 4th down (punt/play).

Overtime

Each team will be given two attempts to score from the 10 yard line (2 point conversion), if the score is still tied each team will take two attempts from the 3 yard line (1 point conversion).

The team winning the "overtime" coin toss will have the option to select ONE of the following:

1. Choose to play Offense or Defense.
2. Choose which end zone both teams will use during the overtime.

The team playing offense first will have two successive tries to score an extra point from the 10-yard line (2 points). Penalties will be in force, which may allow for more than two opportunities. Two points will be awarded for each successful try (up to 4 points possible). The team playing defense first will then be given two separate opportunities to score from the 10-yard line.

If the score is still tied after both teams get their two tries, then each team will be given two opportunities to score from the 3-yard line. The team playing offense first from the 10 yard conversions will play defense first from the 3 yard line. If the game is still tied, the teams will alternate possessions from the 3-yard line until one team scores and the other fails to score.

Interceptions can be run back for 2 points as defined in the rulebook for regular PAT's. The offense throwing the interception will still get their second attempt if the conclusion is in doubt.



Scoring

Touchdown: Worth 6 points. The player's hips (who is in possession of the ball) has to have both flags attached and must be on or in advance of the goal line before any points can be awarded. The ball being reached over the line does not count.

P.A.T. (point after touchdown): Worth 1 point - run or pass from the 3 yard line, or worth 2 points – run or pass from the 10 yard line. Teams must declare before the official can mark the ball ready for play. Once the ball is declared ready for play, a team can only “re-declare” if they use a timeout. The clock continues to run during the P.A.T. however, it does not count as a play during the play period.

Once the decision to try an extra point from the 3 yard line or 10 yard line is made by the scoring team coach, the decision can be changed if either team calls a timeout prior to the extra point attempt. If a penalty occurs by the offensive or defensive team after the initial decision is made, the extra point decision cannot be changed.

Safety: Worth 2 points. There are two forms of safeties. 1. Defense sacks the ball carrier in their own end zone. 2. Defense returns attempted P.A.T. for a touchdown. The team that administered the safety will receive the ball on the designated start line.

Mercy Rule

If a team is trailing by 17 or more points at the beginning of the final 7 play period, the coach of the team behind can decide to end the game. If games are behind schedule, the referees and home team can decide to end the game.

Players, Player Substitutions, Player Behavior

Players

Each team should have 5 eligible players on the field during the game. A team may field no less than 4 players at any time.

Player Substitutions

- Substitutions: Teams may substitute freely as long as players being substituted are off the field prior to the snap of the football or are out of the area of the play and departing the field in haste.
- Sleepers: Sleepers on substitutions will not be allowed on any play. No player may line up closer than 5 yards to the sideline unless he came out of the huddle or unless he was on the field of play during the previous play and did not leave the field of play.

Player Behavior

Sportsmanship: Any verbal badgering of officials or derogatory language between opposing players will NOT BE TOLERATED! First derogatory action or language should be penalized 10 yards (Unsportsmanlike Conduct) and the captain will be warned. Second derogatory action or language will cause involved players to be disqualified plus a 10 yard penalty.



Per CYO CTX General bylaws, a player who is ejected will be disqualified for the remainder of the game; he or she may not be present at the following game.

Sideline players: Are subject to the same disqualification for abusive, obscene or badgering language to either opposing players or officials. If the captain or coach of the penalized team cannot control the actions of his players, the game can be forfeited.

Fake Excessive Contact: Any player, who in the judgment of officials, fakes excessive contact for the sole purpose of drawing a penalty may be warned once by the officials and then penalized for unsportsmanlike conduct on the next offense. A warning to one player may be applied to a team as a whole if the officials state that this warning is to the team.

Begging a Call-During a Play: if a possible infraction occurs and players or coaches from either team on the field or on the sideline begin yelling out or "begging a call," a penalty of 5 yards can be tacked on or subtracted from the end of the play. This penalty will be marked off as a dead ball foul even if it occurred while play was in progress.

Protest-Judgment calls/interpretations of rules: are not open for protest. Mis-enforcements of penalties may be questioned but not protested.

Playing Regulations

Centering

The ball must be centered between the legs and travel at least 2 yards backwards or laterally. A snap that hits the ground (bouncing or rolling) may be fielded by the quarterback as long as it is not fumbled or travels behind the quarterback. Rules for centering are different during a punt (see punting).

Punting

A team MUST declare its intentions to punt on 4th down. The punter may take a direct snap or shotgun snap from the center. The Kicker will be allowed to punt the ball even if he fumbles before the punt. The defense must have 3 players on the line of scrimmage, those players must remain on the line until the play is concluded or the ball carrier advances the ball past the line of scrimmage. Offensive players must remain on the line of scrimmage until the ball is kicked. Illegal Formation will be called if teams do not follow these rules. If the defensive players move illegally after the ball is kicked (punted), the infraction will be enforced as a down-field blocking rule. The Punt will count as a play during the 7 play series but cannot be the last play of the series (add an 8th play) unless a touchdown is scored.

Huddle

After the official marks the ball ready for play, the offense has 25 seconds to snap the ball or be penalized 5 yards for delay of game. It is not necessary to huddle but if the offense substitutes without a huddle, please see sleeper plays.



Shifts and Motion

Players may shift to make different formations as long as they are “set” for at least one full count before the ball is snapped. Only one player may be in motion while the ball is being snapped.

Line of Scrimmage/Offside

The offense may have any number of players on the line of scrimmage. Any movement towards the line of scrimmage immediately before the snap of the ball or once all players are set will result in offensive offside. The defensive line of scrimmage will be 1 yard in front of the offensive line of scrimmage. No defender will be allowed to line up directly in front of the football (5 yd buffer). Defenders on the line of scrimmage will be at least 1 yard to the left or right of the ball. If the defense jumps into the neutral zone once the center has touched the ball, the defense will be called for offside. Offside on Offense or Defense will be a dead ball penalty and called immediately. The official watching the line of scrimmage for both teams should point towards the team that is lined up offside so as to allow that player to get back onside before the snap and avoid a penalty.

Rushing/Screening (blocking)

This is a **Non-Contact sport** and neither offensive nor defensive players are allowed to initiate contact. Blockers will keep their arms by their side and hands behind their backs while they “screen” the defenders. Blocking may ONLY be done on or behind the line of scrimmage. Blocking, screening or setting picks downfield will result in a penalty. Defenders MUST go around blockers. They may not use their hands to touch, push or move the blockers.

Special Notes

A player's hips (flags) shall determine where his forward progress ends (not the BALL). Also, a player that steps out of bounds during the play (without the ball) is eligible to catch the ball if he/she gets both feet inbounds before touching/catching the ball (similar to basketball).

Offense

If a pass is caught by the defender and offensive player at the same time, the offensive player will receive credit for the catch. If the Quarterback's arm is in motion while a defender is pulling the flag, the pass will be allowed to count. Only one foot needs to be inbounds for a catch to be complete although a foot touching out of bounds during a catch will be considered incomplete. The ball carrier is considered down when his flag is pulled, he steps out of bounds, if he falls to the ground or if his flag is off when he receives the ball. Putting his free hand on the ground does NOT make the ball carrier down. Spinning is allowed as long as no contact is made. **Diving is ILLEGAL and will be penalized.** Jumping or leaping is allowed as long as no contact is made. All players are eligible receivers.

Defense

Defensive players may not try to strip the ball from the ball carrier. Rushers may not make contact with the arm/hand of the quarterback. No player may line up in front of the center (5 yard buffer zone) or within 5 yards to the left or right of the center. NOTE: Blocking a pass that is still in the QB's hand is considered unnecessary roughness to the QB. (rushers should go for the flag, not the ball)

Seven (7) Play Series

The point after touchdown try is the only play that does not count as a play during the 7 play series. Punts will count as a play but if they are the 7th play of the series, the receiving team will be allowed one



additional play from the line of scrimmage (in other words, an 8th play) if they do not score from the punt or kick-off.

Quick Whistle

If the official whistles the play dead prematurely, the offense shall have the choice of (1) accepting the ball where it was whistled dead or (2) replaying the down

Penalties

General

All penalties will be marked 5 or 10 yards. Players may be ejected for their conduct if deemed necessary by the officials (Safety is paramount to the players). Half the distance to the goal will be in force when 5 yard penalties infractions take place inside the 10 yard line and 10 yard penalty infractions take place inside the 20 yard line.

Guidelines

In order to establish a simple philosophy in assessing penalties, these general guidelines will be followed:

1. All accepted penalties: Are marked from the End of Run (E.O.R.), Line of Scrimmage (L.O.S.) or Point of Infraction (P.O.I). The Down may or may not be replayed.
2. All refused penalties: The ball stays where it was blown dead and the down is NOT replayed.
3. All live ball fouls: Will be captain's choice. "LBF" Result of play or penalty
4. All dead ball fouls: No Choice. "DBF" penalty enforced
5. Non-contact penalties: Will be 5 yard penalties. (Ex, offside, uniform violation,
6. Contact Penalties: Will be 10 yard penalties. (Ex: Charging, Holding, Flag Guarding)
7. Unsportsmanlike penalties: Will be 10 yard penalties as well as AUTOMATIC FIRST DOWNS.
8. Defensive pass interference in the end zone: Ball placed on the 1yrd line, automatic 1st down.
9. Neither Half can end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines the penalty.
10. A first down will not be awarded if the offensive penalty (LBF) brings the ball back behind the first down zone.
11. A first down will be awarded if a dead ball foul brings the football behind the first down zone.
12. During the 7 play series, defensive penalties that are accepted by the offense will not count as a play.

Most Common Penalties

- Offsides DBF: 5 yards from L.O.S. , (Defense is offsides if they jump into the neutral zone once the offense is set). Also see illegal procedure, illegal shift, illegal formation, encroachment etc...
- Flag Guarding LBF: 10 yards from P.O.I. (or L.O.S. if it occurs behind the L.O.S.) and loss of down. Also protecting flags.
- **Flag Guarding on 4th Down (Example)**
 - Team A in possession
 - Team A advances the ball for a first down but is guilty of flag guarding. Ball is spotted at the point of infraction, then 10 yards is marked off. New spot, two possibilities:
 - A) The new spot still results in sufficient yardage for a first down after the 10 yards have been marked off. Result: First down for Team A



- B) The new spot does not result in sufficient yardage for a first down. The ball goes over on downs, as Team A did not reach the line to gain. Team B takes over, 1st Down.
- Scoring play on 4th down - Score is disallowed. Ten yard penalty applied from the spot of the infraction. New spot. The result of the play is either A) sufficient or B) insufficient for a first down. Loss of down applied if A, turnover on downs if B.
- Downfield screening/blocking LBF: 5 yards (10 yards if contact is made) from P.O.I. and loss of down. Also setting picks.
- Illegal Screening/blocking LBF: 5 yards (10 yards if contact is made) from L.O.S. and loss of down.
- Illegal Rush LBF: 10 yards from L.O.S. and repeat the down.
- Offensive Pass Interference LBF: 10 yards from L.O.S. and loss of down.
- Defensive Pass Interference LBF: 10 yards from L.O.S. and automatic first down. 1 yard line and 1st down when flagged in the endzone.
- Delay of Game DBF: 5 yards from L.O.S. repeat down.
- Illegal Participation/too many players on the field LBF: 5 yards from L.O.S. and repeat down or take the result of the play
- Holding the ball carrier: 10 yards from E.O.R. (or L.O.S. if the ball is not advanced past the L.O.S.)
 - ****NOTE:** If the defender momentarily grabs the shirt, shorts or flag belt of the ball carrier and IMMEDIATELY let's go so as not to affect the runners progress, then no penalty will be enforced.
- Stripping the balls: 10 yards from P.O.I., E.O.R. or L.O.S., whichever more greatly rewards the offense. It is NOT considered stripping the ball when both offensive and defensive players are trying to catch the same pass. If both players struggle for the ball and the defense wins, possession will be given to the offense at the point where both players had possession.
- Illegal forward pass: 5 yards from P.O.I. and loss of down. Also illegal advancement.
- Intentional grounding: 5 yards from P.O.I. and loss of down. Judgment of Referee (if QB throws ball directly to the ground or in front of the line of scrimmage when no receiver is in the area). The defense must be close to sacking the QB before intentional grounding can be called.

Tie Breaker System

IF CYO CTX has standings: The tiebreaker system will be used to determine the regular season champion in case of a tie and will also be used for seeding the end-of-season tournament.

In the event of a two way tie:

- Head to head win/loss between the tied teams

In the event of a three or more way tie:

- Step 1: Head to head win/loss between all the tied teams

Example 1 - Team A beats Team B, Team A beats Team C, Team B beats Team C;

- Team A is higher seed with 2 wins/0 losses, Team B is second seed with 1 win/1 loss, Team C is third seed with/2 losses; do not need Step 2

Example 2 - Team A beats Team B, Team B beats Team C, Team C beats Team A;

- All teams have 1 win/1 loss; move to Step 2
- Step 2: Point differential (+20/-20 points max) in games played between the tied teams. If still tied, move to Step 3
- Step 3: Least number of defensive points given up in games played between the tied teams



Modifications

Modifications to these Guidelines, Procedures and Rules will be documented with a description of the change and the date the modification was recommended by the CYO CTX Executive Directors and approved by the CYO CTX Board of Directors.

