



FLARE

RULE BOOK

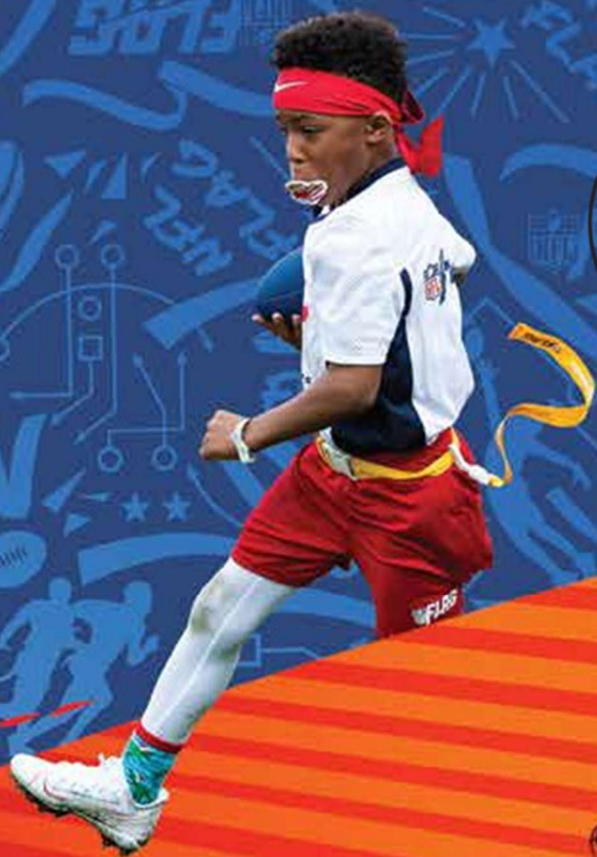


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Rule Book



1. Game

1. The game will be played with five (5) players on the field at one time for each team (both offense and defense). A team may choose to play with less than five (5) players (four [4] players minimum); however, the opposing team can still play with five (5) players. A team that cannot field four (4) players within 10-minutes of kickoff or any point during the game will forfeit the game. Having more than five (5) players on the field at the time of the snap will result in a **Too Many Players on the Field** penalty.
2. At the start of the game, captains from both teams meet at midfield for a game of Rock-Paper-Scissors to determine who starts with the ball.
3. The winner of Rock-Paper-Scissors has the choice of offense or defense. The loser of Rock-Paper-Scissors has the choice of direction.
4. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four (4) downs to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has four (4) downs to score a touchdown.
5. If a team takes possession of the ball due to an interception beyond the line-to-gain at the midfield mark, it will only have four (4) downs to score a touchdown.
6. Possession of the ball will change:
 - a. After a touchdown and the extra point attempt. The new offensive team will start on its 5-yard line.
 - b. If the offense fails cross the midfield line-to-gain in four (4) downs. The new offensive team will start on its 5-yard line.
 - c. If, after crossing the midfield line-to-gain, the offense fails to score a touchdown in four (4) downs. The new offensive team will start on its 5-yard line.
 - d. After a defensive interception. The new offensive team will start where the intercepting player was ruled down.
 - e. After a defensive safety, the defense will be awarded the ball. The new offensive team will start on its 5-yard line.
 - f. The team that started the game on defense will begin the second half on offense. The new offensive team will start on its 5-yard line. The direction will also change to start the second half.



2. Terminology

Boundary Lines	The outer perimeter lines around the field. They include the sidelines and back of the end zone lines.
Line of Scrimmage (LOS)	An imaginary line running through the point of the football and across the width of the field.
Line-to-Gain	The line the offense must pass to get a first down (midfield) or score a touchdown (endzone).
Rush Line	An imaginary line running across the width of the field seven (7) yards (into the defensive side) from the line of scrimmage.
Neutral Zone	The area where neither the offense nor defense are allowed before the ball is snapped. The only player allowed to enter the neutral zone is the center. The neutral zone is the width of the football wherever it's being spotted.
No Run Zones	No Running Zones are located five (5) yards prior to the Line-to-Gain at midfield and five (5) yards prior to the endzone, in the offense's direction.
Offense	The team with possession of the ball.
Defense	The team opposing the offense to prevent it from advancing the ball.
Passer	The offensive player that throws the ball. This player may or may not be the quarterback.
Rusher	The defensive players assigned to rush the quarterback to prevent him/ her from passing the ball by pulling his/her flags or by blocking the pass.
Live Ball	Refers to the period of time that the play is in action. Generally used regarding penalties. Live ball penalties are considered part of the play and must be enforced before the down is considered complete.
Dead Ball	Refers to the period of time immediately before or after a play.
Whistle	Sound made by an official using a whistle that signifies the end of the play or a stop in the action for a timeout, halftime, or the end of the game.
Inadvertent Whistle	Official's whistle that is performed in error.
Charging	An illegal movement of the ball-carrier directly at a defensive player who has established position on the field. This includes lowering the head or initiating contact with a shoulder, forearm, or the chest.
Flag Guarding	An illegal act by the ball-carrier to prevent a defender from pulling the ball-carrier's flags by stiff arm, lowering elbow or head, or by blocking access to the runner's flags with a hand, arm, or ball.
Shovel Pass	A legal forward pass thrown underhand, backhand, or by pushing the ball.
Lateral / Pitch	A backward or sideways toss of the ball by the ball-carrier which is only legal behind the line of scrimmage.
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	Rude, confrontational, or offensive behavior or language.

3. Equipment

1. All players must wear official NFL FLAG belts, flags, and jerseys. The Home Team will wear the darker colored side of the jersey, while the Visiting Team will wear the lighter colored side of the jersey.
2. All players **MUST** always wear mouth guards while on the field.
3. Players must wear cleats or tennis shoes; no open toe shoes, sandals, slip on shoes, or crocs allowed. However, cleats with exposed metal are never allowed and must be removed.
4. Players may tape their forearms, hands, and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads, and knee pads. Braces with exposed metals are not allowed.
5. Players must remove all jewelry, except medical alert bracelets. Glasses must be athletically approved construction with shatterproof lenses.
6. Players may wear soft shell helmets, but they must be secured at ALL times while on the playing field.
7. Players' jerseys must be tucked into shorts or pants if they hang below the belt line.
8. We recommend players wear shorts or pants that do not have pockets. Shorts or pants with belt loops or pockets must be taped. Games will not be delayed for a player to tape up pockets.
9. NFL FLAG footballs will be provided to the coaches; these will be junior sized footballs. The home team is responsible for providing a football to the referees prior to the game.
10. Flag belts and flags cannot be the same color as shorts or pants. Players cannot wear anything that the official feels could endanger or confuse players.
11. Officials will remove players from the field who do not conform with the equipment guidelines. Players may reenter the field when their equipment is in compliance.



5. Timing and Overtime

1. All Games are played on a 50-minute continuous clock with two 25-minute halves, The clock stops for halftime and the Officials' discretion.
2. Halftime is 5-minutes.
3. Each time the ball is spotted by the official, a team has 30-seconds to snap the ball. Failure to snap the ball within the 30-seconds results in a **Delay of Game** penalty.
4. Each team has one (1) 60-second timeout per half. They do not carry over.
5. If the score is tied at the end of regulation play, an overtime period will be used to determine the winner. Overtime format is the Longest Yard Tie Breaker.
 - a. Each team will have one play from their own 5-yard line to gain as many yards as possible. The team gaining the most yards will be awarded 2-points and declared the winner.
 - b. If a team loses yardage or is assessed a penalty on their offensive play, their yardage will be marked as zero. A team cannot have negative yardage on their play.
 - c. If the defense commits a foul, the offense will have the option to accept the penalty and replay the down or decline the penalty and accept the outcome of the play. Total yardage will be the sum of the penalty yardage and yardage gained on the ensuing play.
 - d. If any defense gets a safety, this counts as 2-points, and the game is over.
 - e. If the yardage gained is equal after both team's overtime play, the game will end in a tie.

6. Scoring

1. Touchdown: 6-points
2. PAT (point after touchdown): 1-point (5-yard line) or 2-points (10-yard line)
 - a. Note: a 1-point PAT is pass only (except for K/1 age group, which can be run or pass); a 2-point PAT can be run or pass.
3. Interceptions returned for scores:
 - a. During regular game play are worth 6-points.
 - b. During PAT conversions or overtime are worth 2-points.
4. Safety: 2-points
 - a. A safety occurs when the ball-carrier is declared down in his/her own end zone. Runners can be called down when their flags are pulled by a defensive player, a flag falls out, they step out of bounds, their knee or arm touches the ground, a fumble occurs in the end zone, or if a snapped ball lands in or beyond the end zone.
 - b. The defensive team that scored the safety will be awarded the football on their 5-yard line.
5. A team that scores a touchdown must declare whether it wishes to attempt a 1-point conversion (from the 5-yard line) or a 2-point conversion (from the 10-yard line). Any change, once a decision is made to try for the extra point, requires a charged timeout. A decision cannot be changed after a penalty.
6. Forfeits are scored 7-0 for the winning team.

7. Coaches

1. Coaches are expected to adhere to NFL FLAG philosophies, coaching guidelines, and code of conduct; as well as SCVAA rules and Code of Conduct.
2. Coaches are permitted to Coach on the sideline, and one (1) coach is allowed on the field to help with calling plays and lining up players.
 - a. Coaches cannot intentionally interfere with plays and must remain 10-15 yards behind the play.
 - b. Coaches are not allowed to physically position, direct, or push players to get them into their assigned spots; or physically assist with the play in any manner.
 - c. Teams will be assessed an **Unsportsmanlike Conduct** penalty for coaches that intentionally interfere with a play or physically position or direct players while on the field.
3. All parents, photographers, fans, etc. are required to remain a minimum of 10 yards off the field in a designated viewing area.
 - a. It is the coach's responsibility to keep fans and any other team associated members in the designated areas.
 - b. Teams will be assessed an **Unsportsmanlike Conduct** penalty for fans or spectators that intentionally interfere with a play.



8. Live Ball / Dead Ball

1. The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.
2. The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage.
 - a. It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on defense or offense enters the neutral zone (**Neutral Zone Infraction**). In regard to neutral zone infractions, the official may give both teams a “courtesy” neutral zone notification to allow their players to move back behind the line of scrimmage.
3. A player who gains possession of the ball in the air is considered in bounds as long as the first foot or other body part contacts the ground in the field of play.
4. The defense may not mimic the offensive team signals by trying to confuse the offensive players, while the quarterback is calling out signals to start the play. This will result in an **Unsportsmanlike Conduct** penalty.
5. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
6. Any official can whistle the play dead.
7. Play is ruled “dead” when:
 - a. The ball hits the ground.
 - i. If the ball hits the ground because of a bad snap, the ball is then placed where the ball hits the ground and a loss of down occurs. K/1 grade level will be allowed one (1) redo on a bad snap per half without losing a down or field position.
 - b. The ball-carrier’s flag is pulled.
 - c. The ball-carrier steps out of bounds.
 - d. A touchdown, PAT, or safety is scored.
 - e. The ball-carrier’s knee or arm hits the ground.
 - f. The ball-carrier’s flag falls out.
 - g. The receiver catches the ball without possession of both flags.
 - h. The 7 second pass clock expires.
 - i. Inadvertent whistle
 - j. Ball-carrier leaves their feet other than jump cuts, spinning, or to avoid a downed player on the field of play.



NOTE: There are no fumbles. If a ball carrier loses possession of the ball without a valid pass/pitch attempt, the ball becomes a dead ball. The defense cannot recover a ball lost by the ball carrier, even if the doesn’t hit the ground. If the ball is fumbled forwards, then it will be spotted where the ball carrier lost possession.

8. If an inadvertent whistle occurs, the offense will have two (2) options:
 - a. Take the ball where the whistle blew, and the down is consumed.
 - b. Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.
9. Officials should all agree in order to change a call on the field that is in dispute.

9. Running

1. The ball is spotted where the ball is when the runner is ruled down.
2. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball. The quarterback is the offensive player who receives the snap. A quarterback running across the line of scrimmage with the ball results in an **Illegal Procedure** penalty.
3. Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Handoffs may be in front, behind, or to the side of the offensive player but must be behind the line of scrimmage. The offense may use multiple handoffs.
 - a. "Center sneak" play is not allowed. The QB is not allowed to handoff to the center on the first handoff of the play. This will result in an **Illegal Procedure** penalty.
 - b. Any player who receives a handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
 - c. Once the ball has been handed off, the seven-second passing clock is eliminated, and all defensive players are eligible to rush.
4. Pitches or laterals are allowed behind the line of scrimmage only. Pitches or laterals beyond the line of scrimmage will result in an **Illegal Forward Pass** penalty.
5. Reminder: Each offensive team approaches only two (2) no-run zones in each drive; at 5-yards from midfield line to gain (first down) and at 5-yards from the goal line (to score a TD). See section 3 (Field) for further clarification.
 - a. The K/1 grade level will not use the no-run zones and may run the ball from any position on the field.
6. Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping, or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered **Flag Guarding**.
7. Spinning/Jump Cuts are allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a flag pull. Players spinning out of control will be called for **Flag Guarding**.
8. Ball carriers may leave their feet for QB's passing progression or if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid a collision with another player.
9. No **Blocking** or **Screening** is allowed at any time.
10. Offensive players near the ball-carrier must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. No **Running with the Ball-Carrier**.
11. Flag Obstruction – All jerseys MUST be tucked in before play begins. The flags must be on the player's hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered **Flag Guarding**.
12. Any player who receives a handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.



10. Passing

1. All passes must be thrown with one hand from behind the line of scrimmage and ball out of the hand prior to the passer breaching the line of scrimmage.
 - a. There is no intentional grounding.
 - b. Laterals and pitches behind the line of scrimmage are allowed. There are no limits to the number of passes made behind the line of scrimmage.
 - c. No passes, laterals, or pitches are allowed after the ball crosses the line of scrimmage; these are considered an **Illegal Forward Pass**.
 - d. The quarterback may throw the ball away to avoid a sack. However, the pass must go beyond the line of scrimmage to avoid an **Illegal Forward Pass** penalty.
 - e. Shovel passes are allowed.
2. The quarterback has a seven-second “pass clock.” If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, the play is dead and results in a **Delay of Game** penalty. Once the ball is handed off, the 7-second rule is no longer in effect.
 - a. If the quarterback is standing in the end zone at the end of the 7-second clock, the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage and the **Delay of Game** penalty is assessed.
 - b. If the quarterback throws the ball and then catches it, the play is dead and treated like an incomplete pass.

11. Receiving

1. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off or thrown behind the line of scrimmage).
2. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. All motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted toward the line of scrimmage. More than one player moving at a time results in an **Illegal Motion** penalty.
3. A player must have at least one foot or other body part in bounds and in contacting the ground to gain possession of a pass.
4. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
5. Neither the defensive nor offensive player may physically interfere with an opponent attempting to catch a thrown ball. This will result in a **Pass Interference** penalty.
6. Interceptions are returnable by the defense.



12. Rushing the Passer

1. All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of seven (7) yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players who are not rushing the quarterback can defend on the line of scrimmage.
2. Once the ball is handed off, the 7-yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
3. A special marker placed by the official will designate a rush line 7-yards from the line of scrimmage. Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.
 - a. A legal rush is:
 - i. Any rush from a point 7-yards from the defensive line of scrimmage.
 - ii. A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off or passed by the quarterback.
 - b. A penalty may be called if:
 - i. The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap and crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff or pass (**Illegal Rush**).
 - ii. Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped (**Offsides**).
 - iii. Any defensive player not lined up at the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed or handed off (**Illegal Rush**).
 - c. Special circumstances:
 - i. Teams are not required to rush the quarterback.
 - ii. Teams are not required to identify their rusher before the play.
4. Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however, contact to the QB, unless ruled incidental by the official, would result in a **Roughing the Passer** penalty.
5. The offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has the right to a clear path to the quarterback, regardless of where they line up prior to the snap. The PATH is set pre-snap from the rusher or rushers directly to the QB. PATH does not move once the quarterback moves. If the "path or line" is occupied by a moving offensive player, then it is the offense's responsibility to avoid the rusher. Any disruption to the rusher's path and/or contact will result in an **Impeding the Rusher** penalty. If the offensive player does not move after the snap, then it is the rusher's responsibility to go around the offensive player and to avoid contact.
6. A sack occurs if the quarterback's flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball will be spotted where possession of the ball is once the flag is pulled. A safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team's end zone.

13. Flag Pulling

1. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball-carrier is in full possession of the ball.
2. Defenders can dive to pull flags but cannot tackle, hold, or run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.
3. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball-carrier's possession at any time and will result in a **Stripping** penalty.
4. If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during a play while that player has possession, the player is down immediately and the play ends. The ball is placed where the flag lands.
5. If a player who has one or no flags in their belt takes possession of the ball, the play is dead at that spot on the field.
6. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off a player who is not in possession of the ball and will result in an **Illegal Flag Pull** penalty.
7. **Flag Guarding** is an attempt by the ball-carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the head, hand, ball, arm or shoulder, or intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey.



14. Formations

1. Offenses must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage (the center) and up to four players on the line of scrimmage. The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.
 - a. Teams may shift formations prior to the snap as long as they are set for at least 1 second before the ball is snapped. Failure of any non-motion player on the offense to be set for 1 second prior to the snap results in an automatic dead ball **False Start** penalty.
 - b. Only one player at a time may go in motion at least 1 yard behind the line of scrimmage. Move than one player moving at a time will result in an **Illegal Motion** penalty.
2. Movement by a player who is set or a player who runs toward the line of scrimmage while in motion is considered an automatic dead ball **False Start** penalty.
3. The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between his/her legs to a player in the backfield, and the ball must completely leave the center's hands.
 - a. Shotgun snaps are allowed, but not required.
 - b. K/1 grade level may snap the ball from the side.

15. Unsportsmanlike Conduct

1. If the official witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped, and the player will be ejected from the game. The team will be charged with an **Unnecessary Roughness** or **Unsportsmanlike Conduct** penalty. The decision is made at the referee's discretion. No appeals will be considered. FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!
2. Offensive or confrontational language is NOT allowed. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the officials will determine if a warning or immediate ejection is warranted.
3. Players, coaches, and spectators may not physically or verbally abuse any teammate, opponent, coach, official, or spectator. A **Taunting** penalty may be called if the official determines that the individual is intending to provoke someone in an insulting or contemptuous manner.
4. Ball-carriers MUST try to avoid defenders with an established position. **Charging** will result in a penalty.
5. Defenders must give free releases off the line of scrimmage to offensive players (**Defensive Holding**) and are not allowed to run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags (**Unnecessary Roughness**). ROUGH PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED
6. Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship as well:
 - a. Yell to cheer on your players, not to harass officials or other teams.
 - b. Keep comments clean and profanity free.
 - c. Compliment ALL players, not just one child or team.
 - d. Fans are required to keep fields safe and kid friendly. Keep younger kids and equipment such as coolers, chairs and tents a minimum of 10 yards off the field in the end zone area. Dispose of ALL trash in designated trash cans.
7. Officials are required to report any Unsportsmanlike Conduct or Unnecessary Roughness calls to the SCVAA Flag Football Commissioner.

16. Penalties

1. General

- a. The referee will call all penalties.
- b. For live ball fouls, the team that was fouled will have the option to:
 - i. "Accept" the penalty.
 - ii. "Decline" the penalty and accept the outcome of the play.
- c. Officials determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
- d. All penalties will be assessed from the original line of scrimmage, except as noted. (Spot fouls)
- e. There is no mechanism to challenge a judgment call by an official. The official's judgment is final.
- f. Games or halves may not end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.
- g. Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.
- h. Spot fouls in end zone: Defensive (Ball on one-yard line, first down)/Offensive (Safety).

2. Defensive spot fouls

Defensive Pass Interference	Spot foul and automatic first down
Holding	Spot foul +5 yards and automatic first down
Stripping	Spot foul +10 yards and automatic first down

3. Defensive penalties

Defensive Unnecessary Roughness	+10 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Defensive Unsportsmanlike Conduct	+10 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Roughing the Passer	+10 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Taunting	+10 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Offside / Neutral Zone Infractions	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and redo down
Illegal Rush (Starting rush from inside 7-yard marker)	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and redo down
Illegal Flag Pull (Before the player has the ball)	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and redo down
Too Many Players on the Field	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and redo down

4. Offensive spot fouls

Screening, Blocking, or Running with the Ball Carrier	Spot foul -10 yards and loss of down
Charging	Spot foul -10 yards and loss of down
Flag Guarding	Spot foul -10 yards and loss of down

5. Offensive penalties

Offensive Unnecessary Roughness	-10 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Offensive Unsportsmanlike Conduct	-10 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Taunting	-10 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal Run	-10 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Offside / False Start / Neutral Zone Infractions	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and redo down
Illegal Forward Pass	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and redo down
Offensive Pass Interference	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and redo down
Illegal Motion (More than one person moving)	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and redo down
Delay of Game	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and redo down
Impeding the Rusher	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and redo down
Illegal Procedure	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and redo down
False Start	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and redo down
Too Many Players on the Field	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and redo down



17. SCVAA Specific Information

1. All players, coaches, and spectators must adhere to the SCVAA Code of Conduct (<http://www.scvaa.org/SCVAAB/code-of-conduct>).
 - a. Standards of Behavior – Participants, coaches, trainers, staff, officials, and spectators are expected to behave in a manner that positively reflects the values espoused by all sports played within the SCVAA and its affiliated Associations. Coaches are responsible for the conduct of their players and any Assistant Coaches. Parents are expected to behave in an acceptable and positive manner at all times. Unsportsmanlike conduct during games, matches, or practices will not be tolerated. Coaches, Players, and Parents will know and comply with the intent and spirit of their sport's rules.
 - b. Zero-Tolerance Policy - The SCVAA has a zero-tolerance policy regarding unacceptable conduct. This includes, but is not restricted to, the following conduct at any VAA games, matches or practices:
 - i. Verbally or physically abusing players, coaches, or officials.
 - ii. Addressing an official in a disrespectful manner.
 - iii. Influencing the decision or arguing the judgment call of an official (clarification of rules is permitted).
 - iv. Any physical aggression.
 - v. Use of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco.
 - vi. Using profanity or making insulting/vulgar gestures.
 - vii. Tantrum-like acts (e.g. throwing chairs or other equipment, damaging or destroying property).
2. Equal playing time is mandatory for all players. It is the goal of the League to provide every child with the opportunity to develop as an athlete. With this in mind, it is required that all players receive at least one half (50%) playing time during each game and that each player be actively utilized. Coaches are required to abide by the spirit of this rule.
3. Player Substitutions - Players may be freely substituted at any dead ball.
4. Physical interaction between coaches and players is prohibited. Coaches are not allowed to push or pull players for any reason, including lining up for plays or to encourage action during game play. Congratulatory “high-fives” or “fist-bumps” are allowed.
5. Flag football is a fast-paced game, so players need to be attentive, listen and execute their coaches' instructions, and hustle to their assigned positions.