



Youth Sports Rulebook

2025

FOOTBALL



C O S U M N E S C S D

FLAG FOOTBALL LEAGUE

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CSD GENERAL RULES FOR ALL LEAGUES:

1. Players must be registered in the current season to participate in any league activities. This includes the completion of waiver release forms, code of ethics signed by the player's parent(s) or guardian(s) and the NFL Flag Player Participant Agreement.
2. Participants are not allowed to wear jewelry (with the exception of medical bracelets and stud earrings that must be fully covered), casts (with the exception of soft casts) or any other items deemed as dangerous by the officials. Any medical protective devices (i.e., knee braces) made of plastic or including metal parts (hinges, etc.) must be completely covered by at least ½ inch neoprene sleeves.
3. Any player with a bleeding wound and/or blood stained clothing must leave the game until all bleeding is stopped, all wounds are properly covered, and all blood and blood stained clothing is removed. Failure to comply with this policy may result in ejection from the game.
4. Metal cleats are not allowed in any CSD leagues. No open toed shoes or sandals are allowed. Only rubber cleats or athletic shoes are permitted.
5. Players must wear their league issued uniform in order to participate in league activities.
6. Parents are not allowed to be on the field of play with the exception of a player being injured. Parents also may not be on the team's bench unless they are a certified coach and cleared through CSD.

CSD GENERAL COVID GUIDELINES FOR ALL LEAGUES:

- Teams will use their own game ball on offense.
- No pre-game or post game handshakes, no-contact sportsmanship gestures are encouraged as an alternative (waves, bows, etc.)
- Spectators must be a minimum of 20 feet away from player benches at all time and must practice proper social distancing etiquette when possible. (i.e. sit 6 feet apart)
- Players should eliminate huddles when possible. If teams need to huddle together for a play, they should practice social distancing during huddles when possible.
- Players should keep mouth guards in while on the field when possible, if a mouth guard falls out players will be instructed to grab it themselves with no additional help from another participant or coach.
- Players are expected to maintain social distancing before, during, and after the game when possible.
- Players can bring their own equipment if they prefer to use the shared equipment as little as possible (this includes, gloves, water bottles, formation wristbands, etc.), but some equipment will be shared as a necessity during games (e.g. football).
- Coaches and players are required to conduct a daily self-assessment and not attend practices or scrimmages if
 1. They are feeling ill or exhibit symptoms of Covid-19
 2. An individual or house member has been in close contact with anyone who has tested positive for, been diagnosed with or is suspected to have COVID.
 3. The individual has tested positive for covid-19 and has not determined it is safe to return.

FLAG FOOTBALL SPECIFIC RULES:

All flag football games will be governed by Cosumnes Community Services District Flag Football rules except as specified herein. All rules, changes, or exceptions to rules are subject to CSD Sports Staff's final decision.

Updated Rule Changes (est 2023) :

- The ball is spotted from where the ball is when the flag is pulled.
- 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 three (3) downs to score a touchdown.
- If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, on 3 downs, and elect to "punt" on 4th down, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its own 5-yard line. If the offensive team goes for it on 4th down and does not cross field, the opposing team will start its possession from the spot.
- Offensive Teams MUST declare 4th down intent; "Play or Punt", when asked by the referee and prior to the 'Ready for Play'.
- Teams may use a timeout only to change the declaration of "Play" at any time prior to the expiration of the play clock
- If the declaration is "Punt" the ball changes possession and will be placed at the opposing Team's 5-yard line, 1st down, with NO option to change the declaration.
- If the offense fails to score, after crossing midfield the ball changes possession and the new offensive Team starts at its 5-yard line
- Interceptions returned for scores during regular game play are worth six points, conversions or overtime are worth two points
- A play will be called dead (no penalty) if the ball-carrier leaves their feet other than jump cuts, spinning or to avoid a downed player on the field of play
- 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.

RULES AND REGULATIONS:

1. Participants must be between the ages of five (5) and fourteen (14) in order to participate in league play. The age bracket in which a player plays should be determined by the player's age as of the Player Clinic Day.
2. The league is divided into 3 co-ed divisions: Division 1 (ages 11-14). Division 2 (ages 8-10). Division 3 (ages 5-7).
3. All players receive a NFL flag football jersey and mouthpiece. If necessary, an NFL jersey can be replaced for a fee of \$25, if extra jerseys are available.
4. Teams are composed of a minimum of seven (7) players to a maximum of ten (10) players in Divisions 1, and 2. Five (5) players per team play on the field in these divisions. In Division 3, teams are composed of a minimum of eight (8) players to a maximum of twelve (12) players. Six (6) players per team play on the field in this division.
5. CSD Staff may add or move players to teams as necessary.
6. Coaches will determine practice times. Practice will not be less than once a week for one hour and not more than twice a week for a total of two hours.

7. Parents, families, and friends must sit on the opposite side of the field from the players and coaches during the game. Coaches in Division 1 & 2 are not allowed on the field of play unless it is to assist an injured player.
8. Only Cleared Coaches in Division 3 will be allowed to coach on the field.
9. In Divisions 1 & 2, the playing field is 30 x 70 yards long and is divided into two (2) – 25 yard zones. End zones are 10-yards deep. In Division 3, the playing field is 30 x 50 yards long and is divided into two (2) - 15 yard zones. End zones are 10 yards deep. Corners of the end zone will be marked with pylons.
10. Each team is allowed 1 head coach, plus 1 assistant who must have cleared fingerprints. These are the only 2 people that are allowed on the bench and in proper coaching attire. ***(An additional assistant coach can be added only after the draft & teams have been selected who is also allowed on the bench)***
11. Coaches are expected to help enforce and abide by the policy of no alcohol or tobacco at practices or games. This includes alcohol or tobacco ads on products such as hats, shirts, chairs, umbrellas, or ice chests. They must abide by the PCA Coaches Code of Conduct and CSD Coaches' Code of Ethics as signed at the Coach's Clinic.
Once cleared coaches have met coaching requirements and have been notified by CSD sports staff, they will receive a Coaches ID badge. ID badges and coaches' shirts will not be issued before the Coaches Meeting. Only cleared coaches can have their photos taken with their team(s) during picture day. ID badges and coaches shirts must be worn during: picture day, all leagues practices and games, and any related CSD events. Only cleared coaches may run a practice or a game.

ATTIRE:

1. Cleats are allowed (no metal spikes). Shorts without pockets. Inspections will be made. No bare feet or open-toed shoes allowed.
2. All players must wear a protective mouthpiece; there are no exceptions.
3. All players wear their CSD flag football jersey during play. Jerseys must be tucked in and may not cover the flag belt. Players are responsible for their jersey and mouthpiece. If mouthpieces are lost they are available at local sporting goods stores or at the front desk of Wackford for a nominal fee.
4. Players are not allowed to wear jewelry, hair barrettes, hats, casts or any hazardous items. Players must remove all unauthorized items. The only jewelry that is acceptable is stud earrings. A player may continue to wear stud earrings during flag football games and practices as long as it is covered by a band aid or tape during such times.

GAME TIME:

1. Before the game begins coaches and officials will meet to discuss game rules, penalties, etc... The team captains will take part in a coin toss at midfield. The visiting team may call heads or tails or defer for the home team to call the toss. The coin toss determines first possession. The team losing the toss will determine which side of the field to defend.
2. Game length is four (4) quarters, ten minute running time. There will be a (5) five minute break at halftime and teams will switch ends of the field after half time.
3. Each team is allowed two (2) time outs per half (60 seconds each). There may be an official time out to assist injured players at the official's discretion.

4. Possessions / Downs

- a. Division 3: The offensive team takes possession at its own (5) five yard line and has **4** plays to cross the first down marker at mid-field. If they fail to cross the marker at mid-field or score a touchdown, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over at its own (5) five yard line. If the offensive team crosses the first down at mid-field they have **4** more plays to score a touchdown. If they fail to score, the ball again changes possession to the new offensive team at their own (5) five-yard line.
- b. Divisions 1 & 2: 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 three (3) downs to score a touchdown.
 - i. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, on 3 downs, and elect to "punt" on 4th down, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its own 5-yard line. If the offensive team goes for it on 4th down and does not cross field, the opposing team will start its possession from the spot.
 - ii. Offensive Teams **MUST** declare 4th down intent; "Play or Punt", when asked by the referee and prior to the 'Ready for Play'.
 - iii. Teams may use a timeout only to change the declaration of "Play" at any time prior to the expiration of the play clock
 - iv. If the declaration is "Punt" the ball changes possession and will be placed at the opposing Team's 5-yard line, 1st down, with **NO** option to change the declaration.
 - v. If the offense fails to score, after crossing midfield the ball changes possession and the new offensive Team starts at its 5-yard line
5. The ball must be snapped between the legs to start play (not off to the side). Shotgun snaps are permitted.
6. The clock will stop with two (2) minutes remaining in the game and will be restarted when the offense snaps the ball. After the 2 minute warning the clock will stop on all penalties in Divisions 1 & 2 **only** and will be restarted when the offense snaps the ball.

DURING THE GAME:

1. Prior to the start of the second half, teams will change ends with possession of the ball going to the team that started the game on defense.
2. Each time the ball is spotted the offense has 30 seconds to snap the ball.

BLOCKING:

1. No blocking or "shadow" blocking is allowed.
2. Any attempts to cause "contact" between players will result in an illegal contact penalty which can be upgraded to unsportsmanlike conduct if the contact is considered malicious.
3. Offensive players cannot impede the defender's opportunity to make a play on an offensive player. Crossing routes are permitted. However, if it appears to the official an offensive player is doing a chip block (purposely getting in the defenders way on a route) a penalty can be called.

RUNNING:

1. The quarterback cannot run the ball; whoever receives the snap is deemed QB.
2. Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. No pitches.
3. The offense may use multiple hand-offs behind the line of scrimmage.
4. **NO** hand-offs once the runner has past the line of scrimmage.
5. There are no restrictions on the number of running plays allowed.
6. A play is not considered a run play until the player crosses the line of scrimmage with the ball.
7. Once the ball has been handed-off, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
8. No running plays are allowed in the five (5) yard zones leading up to midfield and the end zone.
9. A play will be called dead (no penalty) if the ball-carrier leaves their feet other than jump cuts, spinning or to avoid a downed player on the field of play
 - a. Spinning/Jump Cuts are allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a flag pull.
 - b. Players spinning out of control will be called for flag guarding.
10. The ball is spotted from where the ball is when the flag is pulled.
11. The center must give up possession of the ball to another player for the play to begin. The center is not eligible to receive a handoff but is eligible to receive a pass.
12. The ball carrier has the responsibility to avoid contact.
13. 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.

SCORING:

1. All touchdowns are worth 6 points
2. Extra points are at the discretion of the coach. (1) Point for 5-yard conversions (passing only), and (2) points for 10-yard conversions (pass or run).
3. Defensive interceptions may be returned for touchdowns. If the interception is not returned for a touchdown, then the ball will be placed at the spot of the flag being pulled.
4. Interceptions on a conversion attempt may be ran back for a score and are worth two points

RECEIVING:

5. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage.)
6. Only one (1) player is allowed in motion at a time. The player in motion is allowed to move parallel to the line of scrimmage or away from the line of scrimmage. At no time is the player in motion allowed to have any forward progress towards the line of scrimmage.
7. No running start towards the line of scrimmage will be allowed.
8. Players must have one (1) foot in-bounds when making a catch.

PASSING:

1. Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
2. A pass that is caught or lands (other than a blocked pass) behind the line of scrimmage is considered an illegal forward pass.
3. The quarterback has a seven (7) second pass clock to throw the ball. If a pass is not thrown within the seven (7) seconds, the play is dead and it is ruled a sack where the

quarterback is standing when the pass clock expires. Once the ball is handed off, the seven (7) second rule is no longer in effect, but any and all defenders are allowed to rush. The staff will count by hand signals and may count aloud the last few seconds for the quarterback to hear.

4. Interceptions are returnable and returning team will take possession where runner is downed

DEAD BALLS:

1. The ball must be snapped between the legs, not off to one side, to start play. If there is an issue with this method of snap, bring it up with the officials before the game in order to work out an alternative method. Final approval goes to the game officials.
2. Substitution may be made on any dead ball.
3. A blown whistle signals the play is dead.
4. Play is ruled "dead" when:
 - a. Ball carrier's flag is pulled.
 - b. Ball carrier's flag falls off.
 - c. Ball carrier steps out of bounds.
 - d. Ball carrier hits the ground with a body part other than foot or hand.
 - e. Ball carrier leaves their feet illegally.
 - f. When officials call flag guarding.
 - g. Touchdown or safety is scored.
5. Fumbles may not be returned or advanced, ground contact does not have to be made. Fumbles will be spotted where the ball hits the ground, if the ball is fumbled forwards or is caught by another player then it will be spotted where the ball carrier lost possession.

RUSHING THE QUARTERBACK:

1. All players who rush the quarterback 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 not rushing the quarterback may defend at the line of scrimmage.
2. Once the ball is handed off, the seven (7) yard rule is no longer in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage. A special marker will designate seven (7) yards from the line of scrimmage.
3. 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. Additionally, players are not allowed to leave their feet (jump) to block a pass.
4. 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.

SCORING A SAFETY:

1. If the runner's flag is pulled while behind the goal line by the defensive team.
2. If the ball hits the ground in the end zone during an offensive snap or hand off.
3. The team which scored the safety takes over possession on their 5 yard line.

SPORTSMANSHIP / ROUGHING:

1. If an official or CSD staff member witnesses any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, spiking the football, trash talking, hard blocking, or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped. The official will assess a penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct and the player may have to sit out for the remainder of the game.
2. If a coach is ejected from the game, they must leave the park area. CSD staff will not tolerate irate parents or fans; they will be directed to leave if an official or CSD staff member believes their conduct is unsportsmanlike.
3. Any coaches, players, or fans in violation of the CSD Code of Conduct will need to meet with the CSD Staff prior to the next league event (i.e. practice or game) in order to participate in league activities again.
4. Coaches are responsible for the actions of their players and fans. Referee may ask the coach to address unsportsmanlike conduct by parents and spectators.

PARTICIPATION RULE:

1. **All players must have the opportunity of playing at least two quarters of a four quarter game.**
2. **No player should play the entire length of a game. If there is an uneven amount of players on a team, the coach should rotate those players who will receive a few more minutes of playing time each week. No player should sit out for a full half (with the exception of those injured or on sent off at an official's request).**
3. Players with a foreign object, such as a hard cast on their arm(s), will be declared ineligible to play in that game. Any object or piece of equipment, which could cause harm to the players on the other team, will also be declared ineligible to play. All such cases will be assessed on a weekly basis by officials.

DEFENSIVE SPOT FOUL:

Defensive Pass Interference	Automatic first down
Holding	+5 yards and automatic first down
Stripping	+5 yards and automatic first down

DEFENSIVE PENALTIES:

Defensive unnecessary roughness	+10 yards and automatic first down
Defensive unsportsmanlike conduct	+10 yards and automatic first down
Offside	+5 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Illegal rush	+5 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Illegal Flag pull	+5 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Roughing the passer	+5 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Taunting	+5 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down

OFFENSIVE SPOT FOUL:

Screening, blocking or running with the ball	-5 yards and loss of down
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Charging	-5 yards and loss of down
Flag Guarding	-5 yards and loss of down

OFFENSIVE PENALTIES:

Offensive unnecessary roughness	-10 Yards and loss of down
Offensive unsportsmanlike conduct	-10 yards and loss of down
Offside / false start	-5 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal Forward pass	-5 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down
Offensive pass interference	-5 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal motion	-5 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down
Delay of game	-5 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down
Impeding the rusher	-5 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down