

Sports City Arena Flag Football – Laws of the Game

The following laws of the game have been adapted for indoor arena flag football. Anything that is not specifically modified defaults to the closest corresponding NFL rule.

Any policies not specified in this document will default to Sports City's facility rules/policies, including those normally used in our arena soccer leagues.

Law 1: League Rules

- Sports City Arena Flag Football is a 4 v 4 Adult (16 years and older) Coed league. At least three players are required to start and continue a game. If a team drops below the required three players, they will forfeit the game.
- Although it is a Coed league and women are welcome to participate, there is no requirement to have a female on the field.
- The maximum roster size is twelve players. Players can be added with no charge up until the 3rd game of session, after the 3rd game it is a \$25 late add fee per player added.
- Team fees must be paid before a team's second game of the session starts.
- Teams are permitted to use guest players. (See Sports City's Arena Soccer Guest Pass Policy <https://playsportscity.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Guest-Pass-Policy-2-26-25.pdf>)
- All players must hold a Sports City membership and have a current waiver signed.
- All schedules are final. Any rescheduling must be requested online at least 10 days in advance and accompanied by payment of a \$50 reschedule fee. Reschedules are not guaranteed. Playoff games may not be rescheduled.
- Forfeits will result in a loss and will be scored 2 – 0 in favor of the non-forfeiting team (the score of 2 – 0 is taken from the NFL's official rules <http://www.nfl.com/rulebook/emergencies>)
- Forfeits will result in a \$100 forfeit fine that will go as a credit to the other team who lost a game.
- Officials, referees, and clock operators are an extension of the game itself. Interference, errors, or otherwise game-altering decisions by any of these individuals does not warrant a review of the outcome of any game. Surveillance will only be reviewed for disciplinary reasons.
- When determining seeding for playoffs, in case of a tie in the league standings after all regular season games are played, the tie breaker will be determined with the following comparisons. (If teams are still tied after one comparison, the next comparison is used.)
 - Head-to-Head (win/loss & points for/against)
 - Overall Points Against
 - Overall Points Differential
 - Coin flip
- Foul language (including swearing, trash talking, verbal taunting, and offensive or abusive language) will not be tolerated and can be penalized as unsportsmanlike conduct. Referees will use blue cards to penalize players and/or teams for using foul language or other unsportsmanlike conduct. Red cards can also be used to eject players for the game, and ejections will be made at the discretion of the official(s).
- If the referee witnesses any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike conduct, the game will be stopped, and the player can be ejected from the game. Foul play will not be tolerated.

- The league will provide two referees per game
 - In the case of 1 referee, staff will step in if qualified, if not the lone referee will manage the game.
- Playoffs are dependent on the number of teams registered for a given season. In any format, playoffs are to be single elimination, seeded, single-day championship tournaments (see Law 6 for more details on playoffs).

Law 2: Attire and Equipment

- Cleats are not allowed on Sports City's arena fields. All footwears must be closed-toed athletic shoes, turf shoes or sneakers. Inspections can and will be made.
- Shirts/jerseys must be tucked into shorts, pants, or the flag belt.
- Flags will be provided by the league. Teams may not use their own flags.
- Flags must be worn at each hip.
- No headgear with an extended bill may be worn (ex: caps, visors, etc.). Exceptions will be made if the bill is backwards.
- Teams must wear similar/like colored shirts or jerseys, which will be determined at the discretion of the officials and/or Sports City staff.
- Teams can provide their own ball, but Sports City will have some available if needed.

Law 3: Scoring

- Touchdown = 6 points
- Extra Point = 1 point (from 5 yards out) or 2 points (from 10 yards out)
- Extra point try intercepted and returned to endzone = 2 points
- Safety = 2 points

Law 4: Gameplay

- Sports City Arena Flag Football is a limited contact league. Incidental contact that is a result of normal, fair play will be allowed. However, dangerous, malicious, or overly aggressive contact, intentional or otherwise, will not be tolerated. It is up to the discretion of the officials to decide what is permissible and what is not.
- All games will start on time, but a 5-minute grace period will be allowed if a team has under the minimum number of players. If a team is not able to field the minimum number of players by the end of the grace period, they will forfeit the game. If a team can start with the minimum players at game time, they must start the game and cannot intentionally use the grace period to wait for late players.
- Games will be played with two 22-minute halves and a 2-minute half time.
- The game clock will be a running clock throughout the game. The clock can only be stopped with a timeout or at the official's discretion.
- Teams are given three 30-second timeouts per half. Timeouts do not carry over between halves. The clock will restart immediately after the 30 seconds are up, not once the next play begins.
- A play is ruled "DEAD" when:

- An offensive player's flag is pulled. Once the ball is caught by an offensive player, the flag may be pulled.
- The ball carrier touches the boundary wall.
- The ball carrier's arm, torso, leg or the ball hits the ground.
- An offensive player's flag falls out during the course of a play and a defensive player touches the ball carrier (only 1 hand required to touch).
- A center snap hits the ground.
- The ball carrier fumbles the ball.
- A touchdown or extra point is scored.
- Equipment violation: The play will be called dead at the snap if any offensive player begins the play without both flags attached to the belt and/or situated appropriately at the hips. If the referee misses the equipment violation, the play will continue, and the defensive player must touch the offensive player with one hand for the play to be dead.
- There are no fumbles. In the event of a fumble, the play is dead, and the ball is spotted where it hits the ground. Anytime the ball touches the ground it is dead. (Note: Any ball dropped in a forward motion will be brought back to the point where possession was lost.)
- If the score is tied at the end of regulation during a regular season, the game will be scored as a tie. There is no overtime period for regular season games.

Law 4a: Basics

- A coin toss determines first possession, and the visiting team calls the toss:
 - The winner of the coin toss has the following options: 1) offense, 2) defense.
 - The start of the second half is opposite of the start of the first half. The team who started on offense in the 1st half begins the second half on defense.
- The offensive team takes the ball at their own 5-yard line and has three downs to cross mid-field to earn a first down. Once the team crosses mid-field, they will have three downs to score a touchdown.
- Failure to cross mid-field after three downs results in a turnover on downs. After crossing midfield and earning a first down, failure to score a touchdown after three downs also results in a turnover on downs. After a turnover on downs, possession of the ball changes and the team now on offense starts their drive from their own 5-yard line.
- All possession changes start on the offense's 5-yard line, except interceptions, which may be returned. After an interception, the ball will be spotted where the play ends.

Law 4b: Center Snap

- All center snaps must be made between the center's legs.
- A false movement of the football by the center after he is set shall constitute a false start.
- Center may move ball towards either sideline before the snap if it does not move closer to line to gain.
- After a ball is spotted, and the 7-yard rush line is established (see Law 4c), a team has 20 seconds to snap the ball. Failure to snap the ball within 20 seconds of the spot will delay game penalty.
- A center snap that hits the ground before being controlled by the quarterback results in a dead play and loss of down. The new play will be spotted where the snap hits the ground. A snap that is dropped or falls in the end zone is a safety.

Law 4c: Rushing the Quarterback

- Before each play the referee will mark off seven yards from the line of scrimmage. Any player that rushes the passer must be at least seven yards from the line of scrimmage and one yard from the center position (either side). Any number of players can rush the QB.
- Players not rushing the QB may defend on the line of scrimmage, but no bump and run pass coverage is allowed.
- If the ball is handed off, the 7-yard rule is no longer in effect and all defenders are eligible to pursue a ball carrier.
- If an offense lines up in a tight formation the rusher must line up outside of the tight formation. If the rusher establishes his line to the QB outside of the tight formation the offense must respect his line to the QB and not interfere. Interfering with the rusher after he has established a line to the QB is called impeding the rush. The rusher has a right to establish a clear path to the QB. Once the offense has lined up and the rusher has established his path, the rusher has a right to that clear path.
- The rusher(s) may not contact the QB's arms.

Law 4d: Passing

- All passes must be forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage.
- A forward pass is defined as a live ball thrown towards the opponent's goal line.
- QB has a seven second "pass clock". Once the ball is snapped, if a pass is not thrown within 7 seconds, the play is dead with a loss of down and the ball returns to the line of scrimmage. However, if the ball is handed off the 7 second count is no longer in effect.
- Interceptions may be returned. Interceptions during extra point tries can be run back for 2 points. If an interception occurs in the end zone, and the player's flag is pulled before he leaves the end zone, the ball will be spotted on the 5-yard line. Interceptions may be returned from the end zone.

Law 4e: Running

- The QB cannot run the ball off of a direct snap. In other words, a QB sneak/scramble is not allowed.
- The offense may use multiple hand-offs.
- The player who takes the hand-off can throw the ball if he does not pass the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off, the 7-second pass clock is no longer in effect.
- "No Run Zones" are located 5 yards before each end zone and 5 yards before mid-field in each offensive direction. Teams may not execute run plays if the play starts from within the No Run Zone. No Run Zones are designed to avoid short yardage power running plays.
- Hand-offs are allowed within the No Run Zone. However, once a hand-off has been made in No Run Zone, the player can only pass - he will not be able to run past the line of scrimmage.
- Spinning and juking is allowed but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a defensive player.
- The ball will be spotted at the point where the player's hips were when his flag was pulled. A player's hips must break the plane for a 1st down or touchdown. Players are not allowed to dive

for yardage or the end zone. If a player leaves his feet to dive/jump for yardage, the play will be whistled dead and spotted at the position where the ball carrier left his feet.

- Players may not deliberately try to block an opponent's attempt to pull their flag. This is "flag-guarding" and will be penalized.

Law 4f: Receiving

- All players are eligible to receive passes (including the QB if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
- Only one player is allowed in motion at a time and must come to the set again before the ball is snapped.
- Players may not be in contact with the boundary wall when making a catch unless at least one foot is on the ground while the catch is made.
- Players may leave their feet to make a catch. However, players are not allowed to leave their feet to advance the ball.

Law 5: The Field

- All games will be played on our large arena fields at Sports City inside Epicenter.
- Cones and the imaginary lines connecting them will mark all relevant zones, goal lines, and boundary lines.
- The goal line will be denoted by two tall cones at each sideline and the line connecting them.
- The midfield line will be denoted by the permanent midfield line on the field.
- Each No-Run Zone will be denoted by two short cones at each sideline and the line connecting them.

Law 6: Playoffs

- Playoffs are dependent on the number of teams registered for a given season. In any format, playoffs are to be single elimination, seeded, single-day championship tournaments. Please contact the league coordinator with any questions about a season's playoff format.
- If a playoff game is tied after regulation, an overtime period will take place.
- Overtime will start with a coin flip, called by the home team. The winner of the coin flip will have the choice of offense or defense. For sake of ease of transition and to maintain our schedule, just one end zone can be used during the overtime period.
- The offense will choose to attempt either a 1-point score from 5 yards out or a 2-point score from 10 yards out. The offense will have only one attempt to score, and any penalties resulting in a loss of down will force possession to change. Penalties resulting only in a loss of yards will be enforced as normal.
- A returned interception on an overtime conversion attempt will earn the defense 2 points and will result in that team winning the game.

- Overtime will be played in periods of 1 offensive possession per team (i.e. each team will play offense and defense during a given period.)
- The game will be decided when one team leads after a period. If teams remain tied after a period, another period will be played until a winner is determined.

Offensive and Defensive Penalties

Offensive Penalties:

- Illegal snap: 5 yards and loss of down
- Illegal motion: 5 yards and loss of down
- False start: 5 yards and loss of down
- Offside: 5 yards and loss of down
- Impeding rusher: 5 yards and loss of down
- Blocking/screening downfield: 5 yards and loss of down
- Flag guarding: 5 yards from the spot of infraction and loss of down
- Lowering head/shoulder: 15 yards and loss of down
- Pass interference: 5 yards and loss of down
- Illegal forward pass: 5 yards and loss of down
- Illegal hand-off/pitch: 5 yards and loss of down
- Illegal run: 5 yards and loss of down
- Delay of game: 5 yards
- Equipment violation: 5 yards and loss of down
- Illegal Substitution: 5 yards and loss of down
- Unsportsmanlike Conduct: 15 yards and loss of down, ejection
- Unnecessary Roughness: 15 yards and loss of down, ejection

DEFENSIVE PENALTIES:

- Off-sides: 5 yards and automatic first down
- Illegal rush: 5 yards and automatic first down

- Illegal contact: 5 yards automatic first down
- Holding: 5 yards from spot of foul and automatic first down
- Illegal flag pull: 5 yards from spot of foul and automatic first down
- Pass interference: Ball placed at spot of the foul and automatic first down
- Roughing the QB: 15 yards and automatic first down
- Delay of game: 5 yards
- Illegal Substitution: 5 yards and automatic first down
- Unsportsmanlike Conduct: 15 yards and automatic first down, ejection
- Unnecessary Roughness: 15 yards and automatic first down, ejection