

# SDCFOA 2024 Girls Flag Football Rules Summer Study Guide

## The Field Markings and Player Equipment

1. The field size for the CIF postseason and playoffs will be 40 yards wide by 80 yards long with two 10-yard endzones. The home sideline will be used as one sideline. The opposite sideline will be located perpendicular to the top of the numbers (9-yard markers). It is possible, and legal, to draw a sideline mid-way between the top of the numbers and the far-hash marks which would make the width exactly 40-yards wide. The hash marks will not be used as a sideline.
2. No-run zones are located 5 yards from each End Zone and 5 yards from each line to gain.
3. The line to gain will be marked at the 20-yard line, 40-yard line, and 20-yard line.
4. A down marker/box, along with an operator, will be made available.

## Player Equipment

1. The shirt must be always tucked in.
2. No Open Pockets, belt loops, or exposed drawstrings.
3. One flag on each hip (2 flags total)
4. Flags MUST be removable from the belt.
5. The officials of each contest will have the final rule for that contest as to the legality of all flags, belts, and attachments.
6. Games will not be played unless both teams have the appropriate flags.
7. It is MANDATORY that all players wear a mouthpiece.
8. Players are not permitted to wear sunglasses
9. Softshell helmets may be worn to protect the head.
10. Knee & ankle braces are permitted but all exposed hinges must be covered. Most oversleeves recommended by the manufacturer are acceptable. These braces may be padded or unpadded.
11. No eye shade unless one, all-black, single stroke.
12. No Adornments” such as soft bracelets, or wrist bands not worn on the wrist, are not allowed. All adornments are at the discretion of the officials assigned to the contest.

## Timing

1. Varsity contests will be two 24-minute running halves.
2. Junior Varsity Contests will be two 20-minute halves.
3. Halftime will consist of five (5) minutes.
4. The clock will start on the snap to begin each period.
5. The 25-second play clock will begin on the ready-for-play signal.
6. The referee will extend arm straight, overhead to indicate 10-seconds remaining on the play clock, then provide a visible 5-second countdown using the signal used in 5-person tackle football.
7. The game clock will run continuously until the final two minutes of each half.
8. The clock will stop at the discretion of the Referee to administer fouls, for injured players, or for other officials' conferences.
9. The clock will stop for charged team timeouts.
10. The game clock will start on the snap following the stoppage by the referee for notification of the 2-minute warning.
11. Regular tackle football timing will be used to stop the clock during the final 2:00 of each half.
12. Each team will have two timeouts per half.
13. A maximum of one unused timeout in the first half by each team will carry over to the second half, for a total of three. No timeouts are carried over into overtime.

## Definitions

1. **Blocking**



- a. Offensive blocking shall take place without contact. NO EXCESSIVE CONTACT will be allowed.
- b. Blocking may only occur at or behind the line of scrimmage (LOS). Blocking beyond the LOS is illegal.
- c. The blocker shall have their arms and hands at their side, across their chest, in front of the body, or behind their back. Any use of hands, arms, elbows, legs, or body to initiate contact during an offensive block is illegal.
- d. An offensive player who is attempting to block shall not move their feet or lean into a defensive player. No Moving Screens are allowed at any time.
- e. The defense is responsible for avoiding contact with a stationary blocker. NO EXCESSIVE CONTACT will be allowed.

## **2. Defensive Rushing**

- a. A team B player who crosses the LOS with any part of their body is considered a Rusher. If the LOS is not crossed, then they are not considered a rusher.
- b. No more than two team B players shall cross the LOS during a down in which the QB is the only player to possess the ball.
- c. Prior to the snap, a legal rusher may be lined up anywhere along the rush line that is set 7 yards from the LOS.
- d. Rushers must avoid all contact with the passer. Any contact, even incidental, will be penalized.

## **3. De-Flagging/Tackling**

- a. The defender may not make excessive or unnecessary contact with the ball carrier.
- b. The defender must make a play at the flags. A player may not try to strip, grab, or knock free a ball in player possession, including a quarterback prior to passing the ball.
- c. The defender may not tackle the ball carrier.
- d. While "incidental contact" during a de-flagging may occur, this is the exception, not the rule. The defender must make a concerted effort to grab at the hips of the ball carrier and must avoid contacting any other part of the ball carrier's body.
- e. B may contact the body of the ball carrier, but never the head and neck with their hands. B may not hold, push, or knock the ball carrier in an attempt to remove a flag.

## **4. Diving**

- a. No player shall leave the ground with both feet and dive so that their body becomes horizontal to the ground and first contact the ground with any body part other than their feet.
- b. Diving at a flag is dangerous and not allowed. The defense may not launch forward and leave both feet, the body becoming parallel to the ground in an attempt to de-flag.

## **5. Flag Guarding**

- a. The runner shall not make any movement of the hand or arm, even if unintentional, that restricts access to the runner's flag.

## **6. Formations**

- a. All players are eligible receivers.
- b. Team A must have 4 or more players on the LOS at the time of the snap.
- c. Team A must have at least 1 player on either side of the center, anywhere along and on the LOS.
- d. Team A is allowed one player in motion, moving parallel to or away from the LOS at the snap. The player in motion must be 2 yards off the LOS to begin their motion.

## **7. Forward Progress**

- a. Forward progress is the end of advancement of the ball, toward the opponent's goal, in a runner's possession when the runner is de-flagged.
- b. The ball will be spotted at the location of the ball when the flag is removed, not 19 where the flag may fall.
- c. The forward progress of a fumble that contacts the ground, and becomes dead, behind the runner who had possession will be marked at the spot that the ball contacts the ground.

## **8. Fourth Down**



- a. On 4th down the offensive team must declare whether they are “punting” or going for the first down before the expiration of the play clock.
- b. If the offensive team declares a “punt” after committing a delay of game foul, the penalty will be enforced at the subsequent dead ball spot.
- c. If the offense declares a “punt” the defense will take possession of the football on their 20-yard line. (10-yard line for 50-yard fields)
- d. If the offense goes for the first down and does not reach the line to gain, the defense will take possession of the football at the deadball spot and start a new series.

#### **9. Fumble**

- a. A fumble is a dead ball when the ball contacts the ground.

#### **10. Loss of Down Penalties**

- a. Penalties that require a loss of down – If after penalty yardage is administered the first down is not gained, then the down is not repeated as loss of down also means the team forfeits the right to replay the down. (i.e. Flag Guarding – the 10-yard penalty is administered and the first down is not gained, the down is the next down “the down counts”, If a first down is gained after administration of the yardage of the penalty, the next down to be played will be first down.

#### **11. Mercy Rule**

- a. If the point deficit is 21 points or more in the second half, the game clock will continue to run, and only stop for officials and team timeouts.

#### **12. No Run Zone**

- a. The offense is not allowed more than 3 players within 4 yards of the ball at the time of the snap.
- b. When the ball is snapped within the No Run Zone, the ball shall not be advanced beyond the LOS without first being passed forward or backward.

#### **13. Overtime**

- a. Each team will receive one (1) timeout per extra period (offensive and defensive possession). Unused extra-period timeouts may not be carried over to other extra periods. Timeouts between periods shall be charged to the succeeding period.
- b. Each extra period shall consist of a two-possession series with each team putting the ball in play by a snap on the designated 20-yard line (unless relocated by penalty), which becomes the opponent’s 20-yard line. The line to gain is always the goal line regardless of whether a penalty enforcement places the ball more than 20 yards from the goal line to start a new series of downs.
- a. Possession series: Each team retains the ball during a possession series until it scores or fails to reach the endzone. The ball remains alive after a change of team possession until it is declared dead. The ball is live after a turnover in overtime and team B may return the ball for a touchdown. However, Team A may not have a first down if it regains possession after a change of team possession.
- b. If both teams foul during the down, and the defensive team had not fouled before the change of possession, the fouls cancel, and the down is not repeated.
- c. Following a change of possession, penalties against either team are declined by rule. Exception: Penalties for flagrant personal fouls, unsportsmanlike conduct fouls, dead-ball personal fouls, and live-ball fouls treated as dead-ball fouls are enforced from the succeeding spot (20-yard line).
- d. Live ball fouls treated as dead ball fouls may, at the option of the offended team be carried over to the next series of downs and enforced where the ball will next be put into play.

#### **14. Passing**

- a. The offensive team may NOT throw more than one forward pass per play.
- b. The offensive team may throw an unlimited number of backward passes during any play.
- c. No player may throw the ball forward if the entire body of that player is beyond the line of scrimmage.
- d. The quarterback may intentionally ground the ball by throwing the ball into the ground or out of bounds to avoid a sack. If the ball is thrown laterally or backwards it is considered a fumble and the ball will be placed at the spot where the ball crossed the out-of-bounds demarcation or hits



the ground. If the pass is thrown forward it is considered an incomplete pass and will be placed at the previous spot.

- e. The Quarterback has 7 seconds to release the ball. At the expiration of the passing clock, the officials will signal the play dead. Once any other A player possesses the ball, the Passing Clock dissolves.
- f. Defenders are not allowed to contact any receiver. Any use of hands, arms, elbows, legs, or body to initiate contact is illegal.

#### **15. Running With the Ball**

- a. The quarterback can run the ball beyond the LOS ONCE per SERIES OF DOWNS.
- b. There is no limit on the number of times players other than the quarterback can run.
- c. The PAT shall be treated as a new series (QB can run).

#### **16. Snapping the Ball**

- a. The ball must be snapped from the ground but does not have to be snapped between the legs. The Snapper must be completely behind the LOS.
- b. The person who receives the snap is considered the quarterback (QB) for that play.

#### **17. Spinning**

- a. Spinning is rotation (twisting) of the body, greater than 360\*, while moving along a straight line, to avoid a flag being pulled.

#### **18. Spotting the Ball**

- a. For all plays, the ball will be spotted in the center of the field.
- b. At the request of team A, the ball may be spotted no more than 4 yards to the left or right of center along the LOS. This includes the try.

#### **19. Tagging**

- a. Tagging is the act of touching a player with one hand, anywhere between the shoulder and knees.
- b. A tag will be used to down a player who has lost their flag either legally or illegally before possessing the ball.

#### **20. Try**

- a. A successful try from the 5-yard line results in 1 point for team A.
- b. A successful try from the 10-yard line results in 2 points for team A.
- c. During a try, the ball remains live after a change of possession, allowing the intercepting team to return the try for 2 points to their opponent's endzone.
- d. Once a team declares their choice for a 1- or 2-point conversion and the ball is declared ready for play by the officials, the team may change their decision only after calling a timeout.
- e. A score will be canceled, and the down is not repeated, if the scoring team commits a foul during the down. Exception: Live-ball fouls treated as dead-ball fouls.
- f. If both teams foul during the down, and the defensive team had not fouled before the change of possession, the fouls cancel, and the down is not repeated.
- g. Following a change of possession, penalties against either team are declined by rule. Exception: Penalties for flagrant personal fouls, unsportsmanlike conduct fouls, dead-ball personal fouls, and live-ball fouls treated as dead-ball fouls are enforced from the succeeding spot (20-yard line).
- h. Live ball fouls treated as dead ball fouls may, at the option of the offended team be carried over to the next series of downs and enforced where the ball will next be put into play.

## Penalty chart

5-YARD PENALTIES		
Delay of Game	Replay the down	Previous spot
Diving	The down counts / LOD	Spot of the Foul
Encroachment	Replay the down	Previous spot
False Start	Replay the down	Previous spot
Illegal Flag Pull	Automatic 1st	End of the Related Run
Illegal Formation	Replay the down	Previous spot
Illegal Forward Pass	The down counts / LOD	End of the Related Run
Illegal Motion	Replay the down	Previous spot
Illegal run	The down counts / LOD	Previous spot
Illegal Rush	Replay the down	Previous spot
Illegal Snap	Replay the down	Previous spot
Illegal Substitution	Replay the down	Previous spot
Neutral Zone Infraction	Replay the down	Previous spot
Sideline Infraction	Replay the down	A-previous spot, B-end of the down
Tripping	The down counts or automatic 1st	A-previous spot, B-end of the down

10-YARD PENALTIES		
Diving	The down counts / LOD	Spot of the Foul
Flag Guarding	The down counts / LOD	Spot of the Foul
Illegal Blocking	Replay the down	Previous spot or Spot of foul
Illegal Contact	The down counts or automatic 1st	Previous spot, spot of foul or end of the down
Illegal Participation	The down counts or automatic 1st	A-previous spot, B-end of the down
Improperly or Illegally Equipped (live ball)	Replay the down	A-previous spot, B-end of the down
Leaping	The down counts / LOD	Spot of the Foul
Pass Interference	Replay the down	Previous spot
Roughing the Passer	Automatic 1st	Previous spot or end of the down
Sideline Interference	The down counts or automatic 1st	A-previous spot, B-end of the down
Spinning	THE DOWN COUNTS / LOD	Spot of the Foul
Unsportsmanlike	The down counts or automatic 1st	A-previous spot, B-end of the down

NO YARDAGE		
Sideline Warning		End of the Related Play
Passing Clock Expiration	THE DOWN COUNTS / LOD	Spot of the Foul