



## **CENTRAL COAST NFL FLAG FOOTBALL OFFICIAL RULES & REGULATIONS**

### **Players & Coaches / Game Time**

1. Coaches are allowed to register 3 players per team (up to 3 players will be added to those teams by league administrators through a draft after each player has been assessed).
2. Teams must field a minimum of five (5) players at all times.
3. Teams consist of 10 players (5 on the field with 5 substitutes). Some teams may end up with more or less than 10 players.
4. **Minimum Playing Time:** All players on each team and in all brackets must play an equivalent of half a game in both regular season and playoff games. Players are NOT required to play on both offense and defense.
5. In both the C and D divisions, coaches must coach from the sidelines throughout the season and playoffs.
6. Three coaches are allowed on the fields during the games. Only one coach is allowed to communicate directly with the referees. All coaches must be registered in order to participate in the league.

### **Possessions**

1. A coin toss determines first possession. There are no kick offs.
2. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has three (3) plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three (3) plays to score a touchdown. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on their 5-yard line.



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3. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its 5-yard line.
4. All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yard line.
5. After half time, the teams will change sides of the field. Possession of the ball in the second half will be awarded to the team who started the first half on defense and will start from their 5-yard line.

### **Timing / Overtime**

1. Games will be played in two (2), twenty (20) minute halves and a (5) minute halftime with running time for A division or per the agreed upon manner of the coaches. Games will be played in two (2), twenty five (25) minute halves and a (3) three minute halftime with running time for B, C and D divisions. Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.
2. Each team has one (1) 60-second and 30-second timeout per half. These time outs will stop the game clock.
3. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion. (e.g., player injury, unsportsmanlike conduct, ejections)
4. In the case of an inadvertent whistle during the play, the down will be replayed.
5. If the score is tied at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half, teams move directly into overtime. Each team will receive one possession of 3 downs starting from the midfield. If the team scores, they have the opportunity to attempt either a 1 or 2 point conversion. In the event that the score remains tied after each team has received their one possession, a second overtime will begin.



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6. The second overtime will be sudden death scoring. First possession will be determined by a coin flip. The team that scores the first 2-point conversion (from the 12-yard line) will win the game. Each team will receive only one play at a time in which to score.

### **Scoring**

**Touchdown:** 6 points

**Extra Point:** 1 point (played from 5-yard line) pass only

2 points (played from 12-yard line) run or pass allowed

**Safety:** 2 points and change of possession

**Mercy Rule:** If the difference between the teams scores is greater than 28 points then the following applies: For the team with the higher score, no passes are allowed and interceptions cannot be returned. Also, rushing the quarterback is not allowed. For the team with the lower score the 7 second pass clock is off.

### **Running**

1. The quarterback cannot run with the ball if he takes the snap directly from the center.

This includes both a direct snap from the center or a shot-gun snap.

2. Direct handoffs, behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Offense may use multiple handoffs as long as they are behind the line of scrimmage.

3. Laterals / pitches will be allowed behind the line scrimmage only. All laterals / pitches must be underhand throws and must be backward in direction. No double laterals / pitches are allowed. The lateral / pitch will be treated the same as the handoff.

4. The defense may run into the backfield after a lateral and may intercept the lateral. If the lateral is intercepted, it is treated as a fumble. The offense would retain possession at the



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spot of the interception unless the interception happens on a third down. If it happens on a third down, possession would change and start from the 5-yard line of the intercepting team.

5. “No-running zones,” located 5 yards from each end zone and 5 yards on either side of midfield, are designed to avoid short-yardage, power-running situations. Absolutely no hand-offs or laterals permitted in the no-running zones.
6. As long as the player who takes the handoff or receives the lateral / pitch is behind the line of scrimmage, he / she can throw the ball or run with the ball. Once beyond the line of scrimmage, he/she is not allowed to throw the ball or perform any further laterals or handoffs.
7. Once the ball has been handed off or a lateral has been made, all defensive players are eligible to rush directly from the line of scrimmage.
8. Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a defensive player (no jumping or diving to advance the ball).
9. The ball is spotted where the ball carrier’s feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is, with the exception of the lateral. In the case of a dropped lateral, the ball is spotted at the first contact point of the ball with the ground. If the lateral is dropped in the player’s own end zone, the dropped lateral would result in a safety.
10. Center hand-off is legal as long as the center keeps his / her feet behind the line of scrimmage. The exchange however, cannot be between the legs.
11. The runner is not allowed to stiff-arm a defensive player or use any part of his / her arm or hand to guard against a flag pull.



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12. Intentional stripping is illegal if the stripping is done while the ball is tucked. First offense results in a warning; second offense results in ejection from the game.

### **Passing**

1. All passes must be forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage.
2. Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage. Shovel passes **MAY NOT** be underhand throws.
3. The quarterback has a seven-second “pass clock.” If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, play is dead. The seven second time clock applies in all direct center to quarterback exchanges regardless of the absence or presence of a rush. Once the ball is handed off or a lateral has been made, the seven-second rule no longer is in effect.
4. Interceptions can be returned. Interceptions are the only changes of possession that do not start on the 5-yard line.

### **Receiving**

1. All players are eligible to receive passes. This includes the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage.
2. As in the NFL, only one player is allowed in motion at a time.
3. A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.

### **Dead Balls**

1. The ball must be snapped between the legs, not off to one side, to start play.
2. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
3. Play is ruled “dead” when:
  - a. Ball carrier’s flag is pulled.



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- b. Ball carrier steps out of bounds.
- c. Touchdown or safety is scored.
- d. Any part of the ball carrier other than the hand hits the ground.
- e. Ball carrier's flag falls out. If the player's flag falls out before a reception is made (and without an illegal defensive flag pull), the reception will be considered good but no forward progress will count. The ball will be placed down at the spot of the reception.
- f. Ball carrier fumbles. In the case of fumbles, balls fumbled forward will be spotted where the player's feet were at the time of the fumble. Balls fumbled backward will be spotted where the ball makes first contact with the ground. If the ball is fumbled on a lateral, it will be placed at the spot of the ball's first contact with the ground.

### **Blocking / Tackling**

**Blocking and tackling are not allowed.**

**Blocking includes:**

1. Physically moving a defensive player out of the way for the purpose of gaining yards.
2. Running in front of a defensive player thereby impeding his / her progress towards the ball carrier.
3. Running in front of your own team's ball carrier (leading him / her down the field).
4. Using hands or body to impede an offensive player's ability to start or complete a pass route.

**Tackling includes:**



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1. Purposefully taking an opposing team member to the ground.
2. Tripping an opposing team member.
3. Inappropriate shoving, elbowing, kicking, or other unsportsmanlike behaviors.

**Tackling will be determined at the discretion of the referees and may result in expulsion of the offending player from the game. Continued offenses may result in a forfeited game and / or suspension or expulsion from the league.**

### **Interceptions**

1. Interceptions can be returned. Except if mercy rule is in effect.
2. Interceptions on an extra point attempt result in a dead ball (no points will be scored from return of the interception).

**Note:** There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground.

### **Rushing the Quarterback**

All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of (7) seven 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 on the line of scrimmage.

Once the ball is handed off, the seven-yard rule no longer is in effect, and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage. A special marker, or the referee, will designate seven yards from the line of scrimmage.

### **Sportsmanship / Roughing**

Game officials will determine incidental contact through the normal course of play. The official has the option of providing a warning or expelling a player from the game for unsportsmanlike behaviors. If an official witnesses any acts of excessive tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking, or any unsportsmanlike act (including verbal attacks), he / she will determine the appropriate course of action.



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Trash talking is illegal. Officials have the right to determine offensive language (trash talk is talk that may be offensive to officials, opposing players, teams, or spectators). If trash talking occurs, the referee will stop the game and that team will forfeit the game.

### **Penalties**

The referee will call all penalties.

#### **Defense:**

Off sides	5 yards and automatic first down
Interference	10 yards and automatic first down
Illegal contact (holding, blocking etc.)	10 yards and automatic first down
Illegal flag pull (before receiver has ball)	10 yards and automatic first down
Illegal rushing (starting rush from inside 7-yard marker)	10 yards and automatic first down

#### **Offense:**

Illegal motion (more than one person moving, false start, etc.)	5 yards and loss of down
Illegal forward pass (pass received behind line of scrimmage)	5 yards and loss of down
Running in a no run zone	5 yards and loss of down
Offensive pass interference	10 yards and loss of down
Illegal pick plays, pushing off/away defender	10 yards and loss of down

\* Flag guarding/Blocking 10 yards from the spot of the foul and loss of down

\* In the case of flag guarding/blocking, if the player crosses midfield and obtains a first down, the first down will be honored regardless of the spot of ball after the penalty is assessed. However, the team will not be able to obtain another first down during that possession.

Delay of game	Clock stops, 10 yards and loss of down
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1. Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage.
2. Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.

### **Attire**

**Shorts:** Only solid black shorts or pants can be worn on game day. No stripes or other colors can be present on any lower body attire. **NO EXCEPTIONS.** If a player is wearing lower body attire with stripes or other colors, he/she will not be allowed to participate in the game that day.

**Cleats:** Only rubber molded cleats are allowed. No screw-in cleats and no metal spikes. Inspections will be made prior to the start of every game. Any player wearing screw-in or metal cleats will not be allowed to play. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**

**Mouth piece:** All players must wear a protective mouthpiece. There are no exceptions.

**Jersey:** Official NFL Flag jerseys must be worn during game play. Home team is always dark.

**NO SHORTS, NO JERSEY, NO CLEATS, NO MOUTH PIECE, NO PLAY**

### **Assessment Rules**

1. Assessments will take place over two days. Late comers or missed assessment times will be made up on the second assessment date. **Note:** The second assessment date is also the last day of registration.
2. Participants will be assessed in five categories – speed, agility / coordination, defensive skills (flag pulling), passing & catching / route running ability.
3. Speed- Participant will be timed in a 40 yard dash.
4. Passing Ability- Participant will throw for distance and accuracy.
5. Catching ability – participants will catch an out, post, and deep ball.



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6. Defensive skills – participants will be take part in a flag pulling drill.
7. Agility / Coordination – Participant will run through a timed obstacle course including running backward, sideways, forward and sideways through a ladder.
8. All coaches or their assistant coach must attend assessments. Participant is rated from 1 – 5. A score of 5 is best.
9. All coaches will assess a bracket, target the bracket in which they will coach.
10. Each category will have one grader and as many assistants as needed.
11. All players picked should be submitted prior to the first assessment date.
12. Coaches will not be allowed to add players after the team registration deadline.
13. After the team registration deadline coaches will only be allowed to add players during the draft.
14. Participants who do not attend assessments will be scored by the Board during team scoring and rating, prior to the Draft or left blank.
15. All teams will be assessed to help accommodate the season schedule.

### **Draft Rules**

Bracket Seniority- Coaches with seniority within each bracket will either keep their team name or have first choice at available team names only. No coach may take a returning coach's team name without approval. Once a coach changes brackets, seniority towards the team name is forfeited.

1. The board will attempt to assess each team prior to the draft in order to prevent uneven teams.
2. New coaches along with returning coaches will all have 3 players going into the draft. The board may assign players to a team prior to the draft based on skills and demographics.
3. Coaches may end up with more than ten players, in order to place all registered participants.



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### **Coaches Meetings**

All meetings called specifically for coaches are mandatory. Every team must have a representative present. Role will be taken 15 minutes after the hour of the scheduled meeting time. If a coach is not present at the role, it will be considered an absence. Missing a meeting without prior approval from at least one board member will result in a one game suspension for the offending coach.

### **Coaches and Parents Code of Conduct**

The Central Coast NFL Flag Football League is first and foremost about teaching our youth the principals of good sportsmanship and fair play. To that end, coaches, players or fans that engage in actions contrary to good sportsmanship will meet with severe penalties.

1. Coaches are allowed to speak to the referees in civil tones only. The head referee will be the final judge of appropriate on-field behavior by coaches, players or fans. In most instances, the head referee will provide one (1) warning with respect to unsportsmanlike conduct by coaches, players, or fans. On the second warning the player or the offending party will be ejected from the game. In the case of poor fan behavior, a second warning may result in the forfeiture of the game rather than an ejection.
2. In extreme cases, which may include but not be limited to use of threatening or vulgar language or acts of physical aggression, the head referee and/or the Board members of The Central Coast NFL Flag Football League may take direct action to gain control of the situation. These actions may include expulsion from the game or from the league, if deemed necessary, without prior warning. A coach or player with two ejections in one season will be suspended from participation in the next game. This rule holds true regardless of the nature of the next game (season game versus playoff game). Two ejections in a season will result in mandatory expulsion of the offending party from the league.



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A fan who receives two ejections in a season will be suspended from league participation in the next scheduled event. Two ejections per season will result in expulsion from all future league events. Reference Code of Conduct and By-Laws for additional information regarding conduct.

### **Amendments to Rules**

Amendments may be proposed according to Article VIII Section 1A Central Coast NFL Flag Football Bylaws.

Reference: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/25149055/NFL-FLAG-Football-Rule-Book>