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Flag Football



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General Information

Guiding Bodies

World Police and Fire Games Federation (WPFGF)
7944 Convoy Ct., San Diego, CA 92111 USA
Tele: (858) 57-0919; Email: info@cpaf.org

Venue

Maple Grove Park

Entry Deadline

June 15th, 2023

Events Information

Team: Open & Unisex
Age Category: 18+

Maximum of twenty-two (22) team members plus one (1) non-playing coach.

Active competitors from police, fire and eligible first responder agencies may combine to form a team regardless of agency size **WITHIN A COUNTRY**

Retired competitors may combine to form a team in any manner they wish with other eligible competitors whether police or fire. This includes cross country lines.

Officials

3 qualified officials will be present for the competition.

Medical

Basic medical supplies will be available at the venue.
Communications shall be available and preparations made in case it is necessary to summon emergency services.



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Sport Equipment

Each team is responsible for bringing their own practice balls

All competitors must wear a team uniform. Uniform shirts must be numbered and identical in color. Each team must have two different colored uniform shirts available.

Competition Format

Bracketing

Bracketing depends on the number of teams entered.

If seven or fewer teams have entered, Bracketing will be Round Robin with the results of Pool Play being the Finals.

If 8- 11 teams enter, two pools will be established with the top two teams in Pool Play going to a single elimination Finals. Only one division will be played.

If 12 or more teams enter, three pools or more will be established with the top two teams from each pool playing off in the "A" Division and the bottom two teams will play in the "B" Division Single Elimination Finals.

Scheduling

Scheduled for 4 days of competition. See [Sports Schedule](#) for details.

Awards

Medals are awarded First through Third Place (1-3rd). All registered members of the placing teams, who are present at the event, receive medals.

Sport Rules



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1. The Game

- 1.1. The basic concept for the game is for the ball carrier to avoid bodily contact with the defensive player. The defense should go for the ball carrier's flag. The defense must play the flag and not the ball when pursuing the ball carrier. Flag Football is not tackle football; it is not power football. The Flag Football game emphasizes speed, quickness, deception and agility to defeat the opponent.
- 1.2. Flag Football is played with an inflated ball by two teams of eight players, each on a field measuring 80 yards by 40 yards, not including end zones [5 yards minimum, 10 yards maximum]. The team in possession has a series of downs, (numbered 1, 2, 3, and 4) to advance the ball into each 20 yard zone. There are no field goals. There must be 4 players set at the line of scrimmage. A game must start with 8 players and may continue with 6 players, but not with 5 or less players.
- 1.3. Each game will consist of four 10-minute running time quarters, with the final two minutes of each half to be "stop-time."
- 1.4. All players are eligible to catch a pass.
- 1.5. The home team is designated as the top team listed in each bracket.
- 1.6. Receiving team and goal defense shall be determined by a game coin flip.

2. The Field and Markings

- 2.1. Zone markers shall be placed along both sidelines, but not on the field. Zone markers will be constructed of soft, pliable material
- 2.2. Lines shall mark all boundaries, zones and end zones. These lines may be non-caustic chalk, painted lines, or lines burned by a chemical.

3. Game Equipment

- 3.1. The official ball for games will be a regulation size leather football. The officials will determine if the ball is suitable for playing. A team may NOT use separate balls for scrimmage downs and for kicking purposes. The ball used for scrimmage downs will be the same used for kicking purposes. A Game ball will be provided.
- 3.2. The referee may order the ball changed between downs if the field is wet.
- 3.3. A down marker, or other device, will be used to mark all downs.



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3.4. A timing device (referred to as the "game clock" or the "clock") will be provided.

4. Player Designations

4.1. Each team will designate a player as field captain and only he/she may communicate with officials.

5. Player Equipment

- 5.1. No hard padding equipment (such as shoulder pads, hip pads, thigh pads or helmets) may be worn. Soft knee pads may be worn on the knees only. Softball sliding pads, sweatbands and headbands may be worn. Hand or arm pads are prohibited.
- 5.2. Opposing team's jerseys must be contrasting colors. The home team (first listed on schedule) must adjust if there is a conflict. Jerseys must be numbered individually.
- 5.3. Jewelry or any other hard surface material may not be worn.
- 5.4. Shoes are required equipment:

Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Tennis shoes● Basketball shoes● Jogging/Training shoes● All-purpose rubber round molded cleats● Soccer shoes, rubber round-molded cleats● Shoes with screw on● Cleats: max. 1/2" long,● Rounded molded plastic with metal tips	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Bare Feet● Rubber molded cleats rounded to a point● Baseball/ Softball Shoes● Toe Cleats● Metal Cleats

5.5. Host is responsible for providing the official belts and flags. Flag belts must be worn tight enough to prevent slipping while the player is running.



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They must be worn at waist level. Flags may not be altered in any way. Only flags provided by the Host will be used.

- 5.6. Shirts must be either firmly tucked inside trousers or short enough not to cover the flags or belt.
- 5.7. Flags cannot be shredded or cut in length. Flags may not have any substance on them (such as oil, grease, rubber bands, etc.). Officials may assess a) Major Penalty, or b) Forfeit of Game for violation of this rule.
- 5.8. Pants or jerseys that are torn away or ripped, and interfere with the proper wearing or pulling of a flag are illegal, and must be replaced before the player can enter the field of play.

NOTE: Coaches should carry in the equipment bag, extra pants or shorts if needed. The player only needs to slip the new shorts over the damaged ones to prevent delay of game. Reasonable time will be granted to replace any torn uniforms. Jerseys may not be taped, tied or altered to provide a knot or knot like protrusion

- 5.9. Coaches are responsible for preventing the illegal use and wearing of his/her players' equipment. Penalty: Illegal Participation, 10 yards.
- 5.10. It is recommended that all players wear a cup (pelvic bone/area protection) and a mouthpiece.
- 5.11. Pants with pockets, belt loops or rivets are illegal. Recommended pants: football, gym shorts or sweatpants. Pants that have beading or stripes must contrast with flag color.

6. Definitions or Playing Terms

Blocking

- a) The limited use of hands is permitted by the offensive team while blocking. During a legal block the hands are open and must be inside the blocker's elbows. As a defensive player gets by the blocker the block must be released. A blocker may not grab hold or trip an opponent at any time. All blocking must be on the body frame (i.e. above the waist and below the neck).
- b) Blocking may only occur within 5 yards on either side of the line of scrimmage. If, in the opinion of an official, a block is continuous and occurs in the legal blocking zone and continues beyond 5 yards into the offensive backfield no penalty shall be called.



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- c) Striking or slapping is illegal.
- d) Blocking from behind is illegal.
- e) The 3 or 4 point stance is illegal. Blockers shall be poised on their feet before, during and after contact is made with an opponent.
- f) No contact with an opponent obviously out of the play before or after the ball is declared dead.

Diving

Ball carriers may not dive to advance the ball to gain extra yardage (5 yd. penalty from the spot of foul).

Hurdling

An illegal attempt by a player to jump with one or both feet foremost over a player who is still on his feet. It is not hurdling if the ball carrier, to avoid injury, must jump over a fallen player.

Legal Snap

A legal snap shall be such that the ball leaves the hands of the center and touches a back field player or hits the ground. Once any snap hits the ground, the ball is immediately dead and the succeeding down shall start at the yardline where the ball first hit. The ball must travel between the legs of the center in a backward direction. A scrimmage down must start with a legal snap. An illegal snap causes the ball to remain “dead”. If a center lifts the ball during adjustment of the ball, prior to the snap, it is a dead ball foul for a snap infraction (5 yard penalty from line of scrimmage). The center must face his/her opponent's goal line with his/her shoulders parallel to the line of scrimmage.

Roughing Passer

Any contact with a passer's arm before or during release of a forward, lateral or backward pass is roughing the passer. Unnecessary contact after the release of a pass is “unnecessary roughness” (ten yard penalty from line of scrimmage and automatic first down).

Pushing Ball Carrier

At no time is the defender allowed to push the ball carrier in or out of bounds. It is deemed “unsportsmanlike conduct”.



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7. Length of Quarters

- 7.1. Clock time stops only for:
 - 7.1.1. Time outs (starts on succeeding snap)
 - 7.1.2. Scores (starts on succeeding snap)
 - 7.1.3. Penalties (starts once play is ready)
 - 7.1.4. Emergencies (starts once play is ready)
 - 7.1.5. Incomplete passes (In last 2 minutes of half)
- 7.2. Stop time lasts 2 minutes of each half. Time stops for all dead ball situations and time outs.

8. Starting Each Quarter

- 8.1. The winner of the pre-game coin flip may defer his/her choice to the second half (the start of the 3rd Quarter).
- 8.2. At the start of the second quarter and the fourth quarter, the teams shall change goals.

9. Time-Outs

- 9.1. Three time-outs only may be charged to a team during each half of the game. Unused time-outs in the 1st half may NOT be carried over into the 2nd half.
- 9.2. One (1) coach may go onto the field at a time-out.
- 9.3. Players may consult with coaches from the sidelines provided they do not leave the playing field.

10. Ball Ready for Play and Delay of Game

- 10.1. The ball is ready for play when, after it has been placed in the middle of the two-yard zone (the middle of the field) for a down, and the referee gives the “ready for play” signal. The ball must be snapped within 25 seconds (or “delay of game penalty of 5 yards and down over” will be assessed).

11. Putting Ball in Play

- 11.1. To start each half, and to resume play the ball shall be placed at the (opponent's) 20 yard line. There will be NO kick-offs.
- 11.2. A snap shall put the ball in play when a punt is not declared.



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- 11.3. Each legal snap shall be started in the middle of the two-yard zone for each scrimmage down. The ball must travel between the legs of the center in a backward direction.

12. Dead Ball

- 12.1. In all cases, before a punt or after a punt has been possessed, any ball that hits the ground is ruled “dead”. Once the ball hits the ground, it is ruled “dead” and put “in play” where the ball hits the ground. On a fumble that lands forward of the ball carrier, the ball is put “in play” at the spot where the ball was fumbled, and NOT the spot where the ball has landed.

13. Series of Downs

- 13.1. A team has 4 “downs” to advance the ball from wherever the team takes possession of the ball to the next zone, (20 yards). If they fail to reach the next zone in 4 downs, their opponent shall gain possession of the ball at the point where the ball is declared “dead” on the (4th) down. In order for the ball carrier to score or to advance over the line for a first down, the ball carrier must advance with some part of his person over the line. This rule differs from tackle football when only the ball must break the vertical plane.

14. Scrimmage Kicks (Punts)

- 14.1. Punts: All punts must be declared. Captains are to notify officials whether or not the offense wishes a “declared kick”. All punts must be declared before a huddle. If the punting team attempts a run or pass, they will be penalized 10 yards and loss of down.
- 14.2. All punts must be kicked within 25 seconds from the time the official declares the ball ready for play. It is a “delay of game” not to punt within 25 seconds.
- 14.3. Kicking team may not move until the ball is kicked. The ball must be punted from a distance 5 yards behind the line of scrimmage (penalty-Illegal Procedure). The ball must be punted from the center of the field by the punter. The kicking team may not touch the ball until it crosses the line of scrimmage. The center is permitted to move one step laterally to avoid being hit by the punt.



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- 17.1.1. Example: Team "A" had the ball first ... and:
- a) scored 2 points; or
 - b) scored 1 point; or
 - c) failed to score
- then ... Team "B", when on offense must try for:
- a) 2 points to tie; or
 - b) 2 points to win, OR 1 point to tie; or
 - c) score 1 or 2 points to win.

If both teams tie after the first series of downs, the same procedures continue until the winner is declared. No kicks or punts are allowed. If defense intercepts or gains control of the ball, the ball is “dead”.

18. Blocking and Helping the Runner

- 18.1. There shall be no block below the waist or above the shoulders by any player on the field at any time
- 18.2. Offensive players shall not push, pull or lift the runner, or grasp or encircle any team-mate to form interlocked interference.
- 18.3. A player on either team may use unlocked and open hands to ward off an opponent who is blocking or attempting to block him.

19. Offensive Players

- 19.1. The ball carrier shall strive to avoid the defense by agility. Attempts to run over, charge or straight arm the opponent are illegal. A ball carrier may NOT steer his/her blockers. The ball carrier may not spin (more than 180 degrees) to avoid his/her flag from being pulled. Penalty: 10 yards and loss of down.
- 19.2. If, for any reason, it becomes impossible to pull the flag or belt from the ball carrier, the play shall be whistled “dead”.
- 19.3. A ball carrier is down whenever the belt is pulled off by an opponent
- 19.4. A player without flags may still receive and/or advance the ball. The player, however, is down by a one handed touch from an opponent.
- 19.5. Premature flag pulling by the defense is a 10 yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty, and an automatic First Down.
- 19.6. In order to advance the ball beyond the line of scrimmage on a running or passing play, the ball carrier shall not run within the 2 yard area of the center.



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This area being one yard either side of where the ball was snapped. Penalty: 5 yards.

- 19.7. Guarding the Flag: The ball carrier cannot protect his/her flags by guarding, hacking or holding the flag. Penalty: 10 yards and loss of down.
- 19.8. Blocking the offensive centre: It is illegal for the defense player to block the offensive center on, or immediately after the initial snap or until the center assumes a blocking stance, or has taken one (1) step in any direction. Penalty: 10 yards.
- 19.9. If during a down the uniform becomes a hindrance to pulling a flag at the fault of the ball carrier, the play will be whistled “dead” at the first attempted movement of contact by the defense to pull his/her flag.
- 19.10. If the defense causes a shirt to hinder future flag pulling, the play continues until the flag is pulled or the ball becomes “dead”.
- 19.11. No “hide-outs” will be permitted. Offensive players must be 3 yards from the sidelines. Penalty: 10 yards.
- 19.12. 4 players must be set on the line of scrimmage prior to the snap of the ball. Only one offensive player may be in motion. Motion can be lateral, forward or backwards to the line of scrimmage as long as he/she does not encroach in the two yard center zone area at the moment of snap.

20. Special Points of Interest

- 20.1. Forward Pass : A forward pass may be thrown by the team which has the ball in play from the line of scrimmage. There may be more than one legal forward pass during a down, but each must be thrown behind the original line of scrimmage.
- 20.2. Touchback: If after an interception in the end zone, the player tries to run it out and his flag is pulled while in the end zone, it is still a Touchback. An interception may be advanced out of the end zone, except on extra point attempts and tie-breakers. After a touchback, the ball will be placed at the 10 yard line.
- 20.3. Pass Receiving: If a player attempts a catch, an interception, or a recovery while he/she is in the air, the ball must be in his/her possession when he/she first returns to the ground in-bounds prior to touching out-of-bounds. A receiver needs to have only one foot or any part of his/her body touch in-



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bounds before any part of his/her body is touching out-of-bounds when catching a pass.

21. Conduct of Players and Others

- 21.1. Whenever in the judgment of any game official, the following acts are deliberate or flagrant, the participant shall be disqualified from the game in addition to the 10 yard penalty:
 - 21.1.1. use of fists, feet or knees;
 - 21.1.2. using locked hands, elbows or any part of the forearm or hand, except in accordance with the rules;
 - 21.1.3. tackling the ball carrier;
 - 21.1.4. contact with an opponent obviously out of the play before or after the ball is declared “dead”;
 - 21.1.5. abusive or insulting language directed to an opponent; taunting an opponent.
- 21.2. Whenever in the judgment of any game official, the following acts occur, the participant shall be disqualified and suspended for one game in addition to the 10 yard penalty:
 - 21.2.1. possession of alcoholic beverages on or around field,
 - 21.2.2. attempting to substitute an illegal or suspended player,
 - 21.2.3. Fighting,
 - 21.2.4. any violation in rule Section 21.1 wherein an opponent is injured,
 - 21.2.5. abusive or insulting language directed to any game official.
- 21.3. Whenever in the judgment of any game official the following acts occur, the participant shall be disqualified for the remainder of the tournament AND may be subject to further sanctions as deemed appropriate by the WPFGE in addition to the 10 yard penalty.
 - 21.3.1. physical contact with or threat to any game official;
 - 21.3.2. fighting wherein an opponent is injured;
 - 21.3.3. any player who joins in a fight, whether or not an injury occurs.

22. Enforcement of Penalties (After a Foul)

- 22.1. When a foul occurs during a live ball, the referee shall, at the end of the down, inform the captain of the offended team regarding the choices of declination



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or acceptance of penalty. The captain's first choice of options may not be revoked. In case of a double foul, captains are not consulted.

- 22.2. When a foul occurs during a “dead ball” between downs or prior to a snap, the official shall not permit the ball to become “live”. The captain of the offended team will be presented with the options which he may accept or decline.
- 22.3. When a live ball foul by one team is followed by a “dead ball” foul by the opponent, the penalties are administered separately and in the order of occurrence.

23. Enforcement of Penalties (Basic Enforcement Spots)

- 23.1. 23.1 If a foul occurs during a down, the Basic Enforcement Spot is fixed by the type of play. There are two types of plays:
 - 23.1.1. LOOSE BALL PLAY: action during:
 - 23.1.1.1. a scrimmage kick;
 - 23.1.1.2. legal forward pass;
 - 23.1.1.3. backward pass made from, on, or behind his/her line-of-scrimmage.
 - 23.1.2. RUNNING PLAY: is any action not included in item “a”.
- 23.2. If a foul occurs during a loose ball play, the Basic Enforcement Spot is the previous spot (line of scrimmage). Exception: for defensive pass interference - first down at the spot of the foul.
- 23.3. If a foul occurs during a running play, the Basic Enforcement Spot is the spot where the related run ends. The run ends where the player loses possession, if his/her run is followed by his/her fumble or pass. If the runner does not lose possession, his/her run ends where ball becomes “dead”.

24. Administering Penalties

- 24.1. The penalty for any foul between downs and any non-player foul, is from the succeeding spot.
- 24.2. The penalty for a foul which occurs simultaneously with a snap is administered from the previous spot, which is the spot of the snap.
- 24.3. The penalty for a foul during a running play is from the Basic Spot (where run ended) unless the foul is by the offense and occurs behind the Basic Spot.



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25. Special Enforcement

- 25.1. A measurement cannot take the ball more than half the distance from the enforcement spot to the offending team's goal line. If the ordinary distance from the enforcement spot to the offending team's goal line is greater than this, the ball is placed halfway from the spot of enforcement to the goal line.
- 25.2. If the offensive team throws an illegal pass from its end zone or commits any other live ball foul which the penalty is accepted and measurement is from, on, or behind its goal line, it is a Safety.
- 25.3. If there is a foul by the defense, during a down which results in a successful touchdown or try for points, the penalty may be measured on the succeeding kick-off or, if they are in overtime, from the succeeding spot.
- 25.4. A defensive foul on the final play of either half will result in one additional play for the offense.
- 25.5. The referee's decision to forfeit a game is final.
- 25.6. The referee has authority to rule promptly, and in the spirit of good sportsmanship, on any situation not specifically covered in the rules.

26. Penalty Enforcement

- 26.1. In the WPFGR Rules, the penalty enforcement philosophy is based upon the principle that a team is entitled to the advantage of distance gained without the assistance of a foul.
- 26.2. Loss of Five (5) Yards "A" = Offense "B" = Defense
 - 26.2.1. Delay of game or illegal substitution
 - 26.2.2. Encroachment
 - 26.2.3. False start or any illegal act by the snapper
 - 26.2.4. Player of "A" illegally in motion
 - 26.2.5. Illegal shift
 - 26.2.6. Illegally handing ball forward
 - 26.2.7. Illegal forward pass by "A" or "B" (if by "A", the down counts)
 - 26.2.8. Substitution or coach violating team box requirements
 - 26.2.9. Team "A" running up the middle zone at scrimmage line
 - 26.2.10. Illegal position at snap
 - 26.2.11. Helping the runner
 - 26.2.12. 3-point or 4-point stance.



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- 26.3. Loss of Ten (10) Yards
 - 26.3.1. Delaying start of any quarter
 - 26.3.2. Offensive pass interference (also down counts)
 - 26.3.3. Illegal blocking
 - 26.3.4. Illegal block below waist
 - 26.3.5. Illegal use of hands
 - 26.3.6. Clipping
 - 26.3.7. Unsportsmanlike conduct (flagrant offense may result in player ejection AND suspension from future games in addition to loss of yards)
 - 26.3.8. Illegal participation
 - 26.3.9. Illegally kicking a ball
 - 26.3.10. Illegally batting a ball
 - 26.3.11. Attendant illegally on the field
 - 26.3.12. Flag guarding, straight arming (if by "A" the down counts)
 - 26.3.13. Charging; hurdling
 - 26.3.14. Unnecessary roughness; personal fouls
 - 26.3.15. Roughing passer - 10 yard penalty AND automatic first down
 - 26.3.16. Roughing the ball carrier, tackling or pushing out-of-bounds.
 - 26.3.17. Premature flag pulling
 - 26.3.18. Illegal blocking offensive center
 - 26.3.19. Hideouts
 - 26.3.20. Passing or Running play after declaring a punt - loss of down.
 - 26.3.21. Interference (down counts) Example: spinning or steering blockers

27. Policy Regarding Emergency and Weather

- 27.1. Short Quarter - a quarter (or quarters) may be shortened in any emergency by agreement of the opposing field captains and the head official. Any remaining quarter may be shortened at any time.
- 27.2. Interrupted Game - An interrupted game shall be continued from the point of interruption,
- 27.3. Weather



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- 27.3.1. When weather conditions are construed to be hazardous to participants, or the officials, the head official is authorized to delay or suspend the game.
- 27.3.2. It is to be noted that if a game is suspended and the losing team trails by 21 points or more during or through the 3rd quarter, the game will be declared completed.
- 27.3.3. If any time during the 4th quarter the winning team has the ball, and is 17 points or more ahead when the game is suspended, it will be declared completed. Any suspended game will resume from the point on the rescheduled date

Pre Competition Meeting

Prior to the start of competition, a meeting will be held between the referees and the captain or coach from each participating team to clarify rules and conduct of play. Details of this meeting will be shared in the Sport Confirmation Letter.

Player Conduct

Any serious violation of conduct, such as fighting or violence toward players or officials will result in the player(s) immediate ejection from that game and his/her automatic suspension from his/her team's next scheduled game. The sport coordinator shall immediately notify the WPFGE, who will investigate each incident to determine if additional discipline will be imposed.