

**NCSFL Tournament**  
**Official Rules**  
Revised August 18, 2017

## **Rosters**

Tournament teams are comprised of students who attend our respective schools.

### *Rule Exemption Clauses:*

- If a school so chooses, they may use home school students who faithfully attend their church.
- If a pastor has a small church and homeschools his children, schools may add those preachers' sons to their rosters and allow them to play for their own school
- If a school does not have enough players to field a team, or just barely enough, they may combine with another school that also does not have enough players to field a team and form one combined team.
- Two combined schools may not add players from a third school or from homeschoolers outside of their churches if after combining their two teams they have enough players to field a team.
- If a school is large enough to put a team in our league and chooses not to play in our league, students who attend that school may not play for any team in our league.
- Students who attend public schools may not play in the tournament. This is a closed Christian school invitational and not open as a youth activity.

## **Officials**

It is best to have three or four officials for games. For playoff games, three or four are mandatory.

Officials should have a thorough knowledge of all the Tournament Rules.

## **Playing Field**

- The playing field shall be 80 yards in length goal line to goal line.
- Each end zone shall be 10 yards in length.
- The field measures 100 yards from the back of one end zone to the back of the other.
- The field shall be 40 yards in width from sideline to sideline.

- If a field has lines marked on it that do not match NCSFL regulation size, cones and/or some type of clear line markers must be put down to mark the field as regulation size.

## **Game Ball**

Any official size football may be used.

## **Uniforms**

All teams competing in the NCSFL Tournament should look sharp and professional.

All jerseys shall be of the same color and numbered 1-99. It is not necessary for players to be numbered according to position. Having different home and away jerseys is helpful, but not mandatory. Home teams choose their jersey color preference.

All jerseys need to be tucked in at all times. They must be tucked under the flag belts and not bloused to cover any part of the flags.

## **Equipment**

Since no tackling is permitted, it is not necessary to use padded equipment. Soft pads may be worn on the arms, knees, hands, and thighs. Metal cleats are not to be worn; only cleats made of molded rubber are acceptable.

## **Flags**

Flags shall be the sonic, vacuum-retained socket flags. They are available from:

Flag-A-Tag  
Box 35550  
Tucson, AZ 85740  
1-800-747-3402  
[www.flagatag.com](http://www.flagatag.com)

Flags shall not be altered in any way to gain an advantage. (Examples-making the flags shorter, modifying the suction design by plugging the hole, wearing the flag belt backwards so the “ears” are pointing inward, etc.)

## **Time**

Fifteen minute running quarters: After each quarter teams will switch ends of the field. The clock stops for extra points, time-outs, referee discussions, and injuries.

A one-minute break will be allowed between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> quarters and between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters. There will also be a one-minute break at the two-minute warning of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. There will not be a one-minute break at the two-minute warning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter.

Five minutes will be allowed for half time between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarters.

Each team receives three one-minute time-outs per team per half. 1<sup>st</sup> half time-outs cannot be saved or carried over to for the 2<sup>nd</sup> half. Each team will receive only one timeout per overtime period.

The clock will stop during the last two minutes of the 1<sup>st</sup> half and during the last two minutes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half for incomplete passes, out of bounds, a dead ball, or change of possession. During the last two minutes of both halves, the clock will stop on all 1<sup>st</sup> downs until the ball is set in place by the referee; the referee will indicate by the blowing of his whistle and up and down arm movement.

A time limit of thirty seconds is allowed from the placement of the ball after one play until the snap of the ball for the next play. The play clock begins when the referee sets the ball and is kept by one official on the field. That official needs to begin counting down out loud when there are ten seconds left before a delay of game penalty will be called.

Official time will be kept by the referee. Any and all adjustments will be made by the head official.

## **Number of Players**

A team consists of eight players on the playing field at the start of each play. If the ball is in play and a team has more than eight players on the field a penalty for too many men on the field will be called.

## **Scoring**

Six points shall be awarded for a touchdown when the ball carrier's flag(s) crosses the goal line. Stretching the ball across the goal line is not a touchdown.

There shall be a try for one point after the touchdown by throwing a forward pass or two points by running the ball into the end zone. A pass or lateral received in the backfield and then run into the end zone is considered a running play and awarded two points.

If a flag is pulled from the offensive ball carrier in his own end zone or if a fumble is made in his own end zone, the defensive team is awarded two points for a safety.

There shall be no scoring through kicking the ball.

## **Tie Game**

An overtime period will begin with a coin toss. The team winning the coin toss has the option of playing offense or defense first and the team losing the coin toss will select which end of the field the entire overtime period will be played. The game will be decided by each team placing the ball on the 15-yard line with four plays to score. Both teams receive an equal number of attempts to score. Attempting extra points is the same as during regulation play. Each overtime period will begin with a coin toss. Each team will receive one timeout per overtime period.

## **First Down**

A first down shall be awarded to a team when the ball carrier's flag (not his feet or the ball) cross the 20, 40, or 60-yard line, moving in the direction of their goal.

## **Kick-Off**

Kick-offs shall be executed from the 20-yard line.

Members of the receiving team must have at least three men on the 40-yard line.

If a kick goes out of bounds the receiving team may take the ball on the 40-yard line or have the team re-kick with a 5-yard penalty.

No onside kicks are allowed.

## **Punting**

If a punt is to be made the kicker must notify the referee before the start of the play. From the time the ball is snapped, the punter has five seconds to punt the ball. Except for the punter, the offense must be stationary when the ball is snapped and remain stationary until the ball is punted. The ball must be snapped through the center's legs. The offensive and defensive lines must have at least five men on the line of scrimmage until the ball is punted.

Neither team may cross the line of scrimmage until after the kick. The penalty for crossing the line of scrimmage too soon is the same as an offside penalty.

Quick kicks are allowed on first, second, or third downs. Teams line up for the snap, the quarterback declares "quick kick" to the referee, and all players must then freeze. The officials are responsible to "freeze" or re-set the defense without accessing a penalty.

The player who receives the ball from the center must be the punter and has five seconds to kick the ball.

## **Fair Catch**

When a player makes a fair catch, the ball becomes dead where it is caught or hits the ground after being touched and belongs to the receiving team at that spot.

A player who has signaled for a fair catch may not carry the ball for more than two steps in any direction.

A valid fair catch signal is the extending of one arm at full arm's length above the head and waving the hand from side to side of the body more than once.

## **Touchback**

A kick-off or punt becomes dead and is a touchback if the ball touches the ground in the end zone. If the returner attempts to field the kick-off or punt in the end zone, and his flag is pulled within the end zone the ball will be declared dead and a touchback will be declared; The ball will then be brought to the 20-yard line.

## **Dead Ball**

A dead ball occurs when a ball is dropped, a pass hits the ground or when a player with the ball has his knee touch the ground. A player may touch the ground with his hand, and the ball is still in play as long as the ball or his knee does not touch the ground.

When a fumble, misdirected snap, or dropped lateral pass touches the ground it shall be declared a dead ball and the line of scrimmage will be marked at the spot where the ball hit the ground.

On a kick-off or punt return, if the ball touches any player on the receiving team and strikes the ground it shall be declared dead at that point.

## **Offense**

**Formations** – On offense, you must have five men on the line of scrimmage and three in the backfield, including the quarterback. If the two ends are not on the line of scrimmage a five-yard penalty will be imposed. Because most fields we play on do not have hash marks, players should look to the officials and inquire if they are “good”, meaning on the line of scrimmage, and officials should also “help” the ends to know if they need to move forward or back in the area of the line of scrimmage.

**Backfield** – Backs must be at least one yard back off of the line of scrimmage. Backs are the only players allowed to be in a three-point stance.

**Spinning** – Spinning is allowed on running plays, but not hurdling.

**Hurdling** – There shall be no hurdling. Hurdling shall be interpreted as an attempt by the runner to avoid having his flag being pulled by jumping with both his feet and knees being foremost. Jumping over a downed player is not considered hurdling. If a runner spins, it’s possible that both feet will come off the ground at the same time, but this does not necessarily constitute hurdling.

**Charging** – Runners who run over/through defenders who are trying to pull their flags will be penalized for offensive charging. Offense must try to avoid the defense. At times, there will be incidental contact when a defender is attempting to pull the flag and the runner is trying to avoid the defender. In such cases, no penalty will be called.

**Blocking Flags/Stiff-Arming** – A runner may not use his hand, arm, or the ball to block or guard his flags from being pulled. He also may not stiff-arm an opponent.

**Blocking** – Offensive linemen are not allowed to be in a three-point stance. Blocking is allowed by initial contact with the use of extended arms and open hands or by having hands in close to the body and extended half way to block. The initial block must be at or below the opponent's shoulders. The block must be executed in an upright position. Any attempts by a blocker to run over a player who has established a stationary position, pushing through them with a full extension of the arms and hands, the use of extended fists or elbows, or any contact to the head must be penalized as an illegal block. Two men can block one man, but they cannot have one block at his shoulders and one below his waist. Tripping while blocking is not allowed. Receivers are permitted to be blocked the first five yards from the line of scrimmage.

**Clipping** – Clipping is blocking in the back. Blocking in the back will result in a clipping penalty. However, if a player that is being blocked turns his back after being engaged by another player, it is not a clip.

**Holding** – Players are to block with open hands. If a player grabs/grasps an opponent with closed hands or holds the jersey of an opposing player, a holding penalty will be called.

**Eligibility for Pass** – Quarterbacks, ends, and backs are eligible to receive passes. If the center is the last man on the end of the line, he is eligible to receive a pass. Eligible receivers who catch the ball behind the line may also pass the ball. Interior linemen are eligible for handoffs and may pass the ball. Interior linemen are not eligible to receive passes.

**Ineligible Receiver** – The three interior linemen are always ineligible except for the situation mentioned when the center is on the outside of the line. An ineligible receiver becomes eligible when the ball hits any offensive or defensive player and he then catches the ball. After a timeout, only players that break from the huddle are eligible as receivers in order to avoid using a “hide-out-play.” A player may not deceptively stand on the side of the field to go unnoticed.

**Illegal Linemen Down Field** – An offensive lineman must maintain his position on the line of scrimmage until the ball has left the passer's hand on passing plays. If he goes more than 3 yards forward before the ball leaves the quarterback's hand, he has left the neutral zone area and a 5-yard penalty will be assessed.

**Illegal Forward Pass** – An illegal forward pass is passing the ball after crossing the line of scrimmage. The passer’s entire body must be across the line of scrimmage for it to be considered an illegal forward pass. Multiple passes may be “forward” but still take place behind the line of scrimmage, and are therefore still legal until the thrower’s entire body is across the line of scrimmage.

**Intentional Grounding** – Intentional grounding is when the passer tries to avoid being sacked by throwing the ball into the ground or out of bounds while still in the pocket. The passer can throw the ball away without being penalized only after he has moved outside of the pocket. The pocket is considered to be the width of the interior lineman. A pass must be in the vicinity of a receiver or must reach the line of scrimmage to avoid the intentional grounding penalty. A pass outside the pocket must reach the line of scrimmage. A pass from within the pocket must be within the vicinity of an eligible receiver.

**Lateral Pass** – A lateral pass is any underhand or overhand pass thrown behind the line of scrimmage. A lateral pass that is dropped shall be considered a fumble and dead where it hits the ground.

**False Start** – The offense must remain stationary from the time the center touches the ball till it is snapped. A false start is any movement of an offensive player except a man in motion or a back going into a three-point stance after the offense is set and before the ball is hiked. A single man in motion is allowed. He must be in the background running parallel to the line of scrimmage and not advancing downfield until the ball has been snapped. In the event of a false start the referee stops the play immediately, imposes the penalty, and repeats the down.

**Offsides (Offensive)** – A player is offsides on offense if he “jumps” before the ball is snapped or is in the neutral zone when the ball is snapped. The neutral zone will be established as the distance from the nose of the football facing the offensive/defensive sides, plus one-foot.

**Pass Interference**-Pass interference will be called when, in the judgment of the official, a player has established position while attempting to catch a pass and is contacted by the opposing player before contact with the ball is made. If opposing players have equal position while attempting to catch a pass, there may be incidental contact where no pass interference is called against either team. Pass interference will be called if an opposing player attempts to break up a pass by hitting the receiver rather than pulling his flag, regardless of whether the receiver has touched the ball already or not. A player cannot hit a receiver in order to break up a pass; he must either go for the ball or attempt to pull the receivers flag.

**Legal Catch** – One in which the receiver has at least one foot touch in bounds before the other foot touches out of bounds. He must have control of the ball in bounds.

**Stretching Out to Advance the Ball** – In flag football the ball carrier is down where his flag is pulled or where his knee hits the ground. You may not dive forward to advance the ball. If a player's momentum causes him to fall forward the ball is placed at the spot of the ball carrier's flags. A touchdown or first down is only awarded if the ball carrier's flag(s) crosses the line. Stretching the ball across the first down line or goal line is not a first down or touchdown.

## Defense

**Formations-**Defense is not required to have a specific number of players or any players on the line of scrimmage. Defenses may line up in any formation they choose to.

**Offsides- (Defense)** A player is offsides on defense if he is in the neutral zone when the ball is snapped or if he crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped. If he crosses offsides and then comes back onside before the ball is snapped, he is still considered offsides. If contact is made by the defender when going offsides, the play is blown dead immediately. If there is no contact made, a flag is thrown, the play continues live and the offense will then have the option to accept or decline the penalty, after the play is completed.

**Flag Pulling-**The offense is stopped at the point where the defense pulls the flag. Defense may not intentionally pull the flags of any offensive player before he has touched the ball. Intentionally pulling the flag of an opponent without the ball will be penalized as unsportsmanlike conduct.

**Three-point stance-**Linemen are not allowed to be in a three-point stance.

**Roughing the QB-**If a defensive player makes contact with the quarterback's arm without blocking the attempted pass, it is considered roughing the quarterback. If the defender blocks an attempted pass and then makes contact with the quarterback's arm on the follow-through, it is not considered roughing the quarterback. Defenders are not allowed to make contact with the quarterback's body, but there may be some incidental contact when the defenders attempts to pull the quarterback's flags. A QB falling down does not always mean it was roughing.

**Tackling-**Tackling is not permitted. Defense must go for the flag. There shall be no contact with an opponent who is already on the ground. No player shall contact an opponent obviously out of the play, either before or after the ball is declared dead. If the defender is the last man between the man with the ball and tackles him before the goal line a touchdown will be awarded to the offense.

**Charging** – A defensive lineman may not attempt to run through his opponent. Defensive linemen are to try to avoid being blocked in order to pressure the ball carrier or quarterback. However, an offensive lineman falling to the ground does not necessarily mean there is a charging penalty on the defense.

**Holding**-If a player grabs/grasps/holds an opponents jersey/flag belt/waist/pants and does not immediately release a holding penalty will be called.

**Pass Interference**-Pass interference will be called when, in the judgment of the official, a player has established position while attempting to catch a pass and is contacted by the opposing player before contact with the ball is made. If opposing players have equal position while attempting to catch a pass, there may be incidental contact where no pass interference is called against either team. Pass interference will be called if an opposing player attempts to break up a pass by hitting the receiver rather than pulling his flag, regardless of whether the receiver has touched the ball already or not. A player cannot hit a receiver in order to break up a pass; he must either go for the ball or attempt to pull the receivers flag.

**Pushing**-Defensive players may not push an offensive player out of bounds. If the defender is the last man before the goal line a touchdown may be awarded. If a defender is attempting to pull a flag as the ball carrier runs the sideline, and incidental contact causes the carrier to step out of bounds, it is the referee's judgment on intent and may not result in a penalty.

**Tripping**-Tripping an opponent is not allowed.

## **Safety**

If a flag is pulled from the offensive ball carrier in his end zone or if a fumble is made in his end zone, the defensive team is awarded two points. The offensive team will have a free kick from the 20-yard line. The kicker can punt or kick the ball from the tee.

On a kickoff, if a man receiving the ball outside of the end zone touches it, and it goes off of him and lands in the end zone, it is a safety. If he standing is in his end zone and drops the ball, it is a touchback.

# Unsportsmanlike Conduct

## Unsportsmanlike Conduct (15-yard penalty/possible suspension from the game)

- There shall be no unsportsmanlike conduct by players, substitutes, coaches, or fans. Unsportsmanlike conduct includes the following, but is not limited to these areas alone:
- Fighting or any use of the body for extreme unnecessary roughness
- Illegally manipulating flags to gain an advantage
- Abusive or insulting language
- Any acts of unfair play, yelling at the other team, loud noises that are contrary to Christian behavior, or any act that the referee determines is unsportsmanlike.
- Managers, coaches, or others on the field of play at any time without permission, or any interference of any nature with the progress of the game
- Players leaving the field of play in an unsportsmanlike manner
- A substitute or any other person interfering with a player while the ball is in play.
- Using a “hide-out play” by placing a player or players near the sidelines who sneak on to the field without breaking from the huddle
- Attempting to substitute a suspended player.
- Intentionally pulling or removing a flag from an offensive player without the ball
- Taunting the opponent, especially after a touchdown.
- If a team refuses to play within two minutes after being ordered to play
- If a team repeatedly commits fouls, which can be penalized only by halving the distance to its goal line, the referee may enforce any penalty he considers equitable, including the awarding of a score.
- For refusal to play or for repeated deliberate fouls the referee shall, after one warning, forfeit the game to the opponent.
- If in the judgment of the officials, fans display or contribute to behavior that is unsuited to a Christian, it could result in the offender being restricted from game attendance and removed from the premises. Any and all fans will be asked to leave the premises if they cannot control themselves.

# **Referees**

## **Inadvertent Whistles**

The ball is marked down at the location of the carrier at the time of the inadvertent whistle. The ball carrier at the time of the whistle has the option to take the ball at that spot, or replay the down.

## **Spot of the Foul**

Any play where there is a change of possession and a “spot of the foul” penalty occurs, the first down will be determined by the spot after the penalty.

In all other plays, if a first down is gained before a “spot of the foul” penalty is committed, the first-down will be awarded, then penalty yards will be assessed from that point. This may result in a first down with 20+ yards to go for the next first down or touchdown.

# **Penalties**

**Blocking Flags/Stiff-Arm (10-yard penalty from the point of foul/loss of down)**

**Charging/defensive (10-yards)**

**Charging/offensive (10 yards)**

**Clipping (10-yards from the spot of the foul/loss of down)**

**Delay of game (5-yards)**

**False Start (5-yards)**

**Holding/offensive or defensive (10-yards)**

**Holding down field/offensive or defensive (10-yards from the spot of foul)**

**Hurdling (10-yards)**

**Illegal Block (10-yards)**

**Illegal Formation (5-yard penalty/replay the down)**

**Illegal Forward Pass (10-yards/loss of down)**

**Ineligible man down field (5-yards)**

**Intentional Grounding (10-yards/loss of down)**

**Offsides against the offense (5-yards/replay the down/defense may decline)**

**Offsides against the defense (5-yards/replay the down/offense may decline)**

**Pass Interference/defensive (Automatic first down at the spot of the foul)**

**Pass Interference/offensive (10-yard penalty from scrimmage/loss of down)**

**Pushing ball carrier out-of-bounds (10-yards from the spot/possible TD awarded)**

**Roughing the quarterback (10-yards/automatic first down)**

**Running after a fair catch signal (5-yards)**

**Tackling (10-yards/possible TD awarded)**

**Too Many Men On The Field (5-yards)**

**Tripping (10-yards)**

*Note: When both teams have been penalized at the same time the referees will declare offsetting rule and the down will be replayed.*