

Southeastern Michigan Youth Football Association (SMYFA)

2025 Flag Football Rules (*cheat sheet / cliff notes version*)

If **referees have any questions**, please stop the game and ask for **directors** from both teams to verify

Rules

- 1 All games will consist of six periods, eight minutes each
The clock will stop only on change of possession, penalty or for injury
Clock stops when a TD is scored and starts again when the ball is kicked off (extra point is un-timed down)
The ball will be placed at the forty (40) yard line to start each half.
- 2 Each team will be allowed 2 (two); one-minute timeouts per half
- 3 Only one (1) or two (2) coaches for each team are allowed on the field at a time
- 4 Blocking is permitted within ten (10) yards of the line of scrimmage
- 5 Offensive Line – A minimum of 4 players must be on the line of scrimmage
Defensive Line – A minimum of 3 players must be on the line of scrimmage
- 6 First Downs – A team makes a first down when the ball advances to or beyond the field designated 20-yard markers in 4 downs or less. If a defensive penalty occurs in the offensive's team red zone (20-yard line to the goal line), the infraction will result in penalty yardage and replay of the down (up to 5-yard line)
- 7 After a team scores and is ahead by 24 points or more, the receiving team will start with the ball at the opponents 20-yard line. If the trailing team fails to score on that possession, they will retain possession and begin another drive on the opponent's 20-yard line. An interception shall be considered dead at the spot of the interception and the ball goes back to the offense on a 1st down. Once the lead is less than 24 points, they may resume playing offense
- 8 Flag belts must be a contrasting color than the flag pants/belts

Penalties

Penalty

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| 8 There is a 40-second time limit between plays
The time limit is from the end of the last play to the beginning of the next play (snap of ball) | 5-yards |
| 9 Blocking beyond 10 yards:
Offensive player may protect the ball carrier by "screening" as done in basketball
Screening shall be defined as an offensive player maintaining a position between the defensive player and the player with the ball
Movement of the screener's body that causes contact with the defender is considered an illegal screen | 10-yards |
| 10 No forceful charging or aggressive blocking or defensive BULL rushing by players is permitted | 10-yards |
| 11 The defense shall observe a 5-yard neutral zone from the spot of the ball
A player entering the neutral zone prior to the snap of the ball | 5-yards |
| 12 The ball carrier must run to avoid tacklers. Deliberate charging of an opponent
Brushing contact and unavoidable contact is not willful charging | 10-yards |
| 13 Offensive player in front of the ball carrier must stop or alter his run to avoid intentional contact with a defender | 10-yards |
| 14 A ball carrier may NOT stiff arm defender or protect his flags by deflecting the defender with the use of his hands
Ball carrier may not protect his flags with his hands; Flag Guarding | 10-yards |
| 15 Unnecessary roughness by tackler or elbowing by runner | 10-yards |
| 16 If a defensive player tackles a ball carrier
If the runner was in the clear, and in the opinion of the referee would have scored except for being tackled, a touchdown shall be allowed | 10-yards or TD |