

ST CROIX VALLEY ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION
K-3RD Grade 2022 FALL FLAG FOOTBALL RULES (rev 7/31/2022)

Same as normal football rules except:

I. Field Measurements:

- A. Field: Approximately 70 yards X 25 yards
- B. End Zones: Approximately 10 yards X 25 yards
- C. No Run Zone: 5 yard before the first down marker and 5 yards before the end zone. (does not apply to K/1st Grade level)

II. Equipment:

- A. SCVAA Team issued jersey must be worn.
- B. NFL Flag issued flag belts must be utilized by all players. Flag belts must remain snug and unimpeded by clothing at all times.
- C. Footwear must be cleats with no exposed metal parts or tennis shoes.
- D. REQUIRED: COLORED MOUTH GUARDS FOR THE PROTECTION OF PLAYERS**
- E. Junior Size Football should be used in games.

III. Prohibited Equipment

- A. Shorts or pants with pockets, belt loops, belts, or exposed draw strings
- B. Shoes with exposed metal
- C. Padding of any kind, including hard surface padding such as shoulder pads, hip pads, or helmets
- D. Any hard substance on a player's clothing or person
- E. Hard casts, even if covered by soft material
- F. Sticky substances such as grease or glue on a player's clothing or person
- G. Jewelry of any kind, except for medical alert bracelets
- H. Barrettes or other hard objects worn on the head
- I. Eye glasses, unless of athletically approved construction and containing shatter-proof lenses
- J. Anything that the official feels could endanger or confuse players

IV. General Game Rules:

- A. The referee will coordinate a quick rock/paper/scissors between one player from each team to determine which team will take first possession of the ball. The winner has the option to begin on offense or defense. The team that begins on offense in the first half will begin on defense in the second half. The team that begins on offense will start with the ball on their 5 yard line.
- B. The team that begins on defense is allowed to choose which goal to defend. Teams switch directions (goals to defend) at the beginning of the second half.
- C. 5 players on the field at one time (both offense and defense). A team may choose to play with less than 5 players. The opposing team can still play with 5 players.
- D. Football jersey / shirt / or any other article of clothing that could impede the defender's access to the flag must be tucked in at all times. If for any reason the shirt of any player

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possessing the ball during a play becomes un-tucked, the play will be ruled dead and replayed from the previous line of scrimmage.

- E. **EQUAL PLAYING TIME IS MANDATORY.** It is the goal of the League to provide every child the opportunity to develop as an athlete. With this in mind, it is required that all players receive at least one half (50%) playing time during each game and that each player be actively utilized. Coaches are required to abide by the spirit of this rule.
- F. Player Substitutions - Players may be freely substituted after any dead ball.
- G. **Intentional contact will not be tolerated by offensive or defensive player, and may also result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty, and/or player ejection.**
- H. One coach per team will be allowed on the field to assist in calling plays and player alignment. The coach must make an attempt to move 10 - 15 yards back from the line of scrimmage prior to the snap and make every effort to stay out of the play.

V. Game Length:

- A. Games shall be two halves of 25 minutes with a possession transition period between halves.
- B. TIME: There will be a 25 minute running clock per half. The game clock runs continually. An air horn will signal the start of all games from a central time-keeper [there will be limited time before each game to determine possession, so please be ready prior to game start]. Players/coaches/officials should be ready to commence at the time listed on the schedule for start of game.
- C. The offense must put the ball in play within 30 seconds of the "ready for play" whistle.

VI. Offense:

- A. Snapping the Ball
 - The center must snap the ball between the legs (K/1st grade can snap from side) and must release the ball to the quarterback for a legal play to begin. Shotgun snaps are allowed but not required. Prior to the snap, the ball must be resting on the ground.
 - Handoffs to the center are not allowed.
 - If the ball hits the ground on a snap, the play is called dead, the ball is spotted at the point where it hit the ground and it will be considered a loss of down. (No make-up snaps are allowed, except for K/1st Grade = 1 make-up per half)
- B. Number of Downs
 - Each team will have four downs to advance the ball across the first down marker (mid-field yard marker) or into the opposing end zone. After a team crosses the first down marker, it receives four more downs in which to score. If a team is driven back behind the mid-field yard marker, they are not awarded another first down in that series.
- C. Ball Position
 - The location of the ball at the end of the play determines where the ball is to be spotted.

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D. Running

- The player who receives the snap (the quarterback) may not run the ball beyond the line of scrimmage until it has been given to another player. After the ball has been handed off to another player, then this restriction no longer applies; the quarterback becomes eligible to run, pass, or receive the ball.
- The hand-off may occur in front of or behind the ball carrier -- the player receiving the hand-off is eligible to pass as long as they have not crossed the line of scrimmage.
- The offensive team may run the ball after performing a valid hand-off, so long as the line of scrimmage is not located within a no-running zone.
- The offensive team may not hand the ball off to the center.
- If the ball carrier's hand touches the ground, play will continue. If the ball carrier's elbow or knee touches the ground, the play will be whistled dead at the spot where they touched the ground.
- It is the ball carrier's responsibility to avoid colliding with defenders that lie in his/her path. Unintentional contact shall not be penalized, provided the ball carrier makes an effort to avoid it. Failure to attempt to avoid contact with a defender (charging) will be penalized, even if it does not result in a collision.

E. Restrictions:

- Ball carriers are prohibited from using hands, arms, or the ball to impede access to the flag belt.
- If the ball carrier impedes access to the flag belt, even if it is in his/her "natural running motion", a flag guarding penalty shall be assessed.
- The ball carrier shall not lower his/her head to charge or run into a defensive player.
- No intentional contact of any kind is allowed. This includes charging or running directly into a defensive player or stiff-arming.
- The ball carrier is not allowed to dive. If he/she dives into the end zone, it is not a score; a diving penalty shall be imposed from the goal line.
- Once the ball carrier crosses the line of scrimmage, his/her teammates must stop running. Any offensive player who continues running and impedes the progress of a defensive player who is attempting to pull the ball carrier's flag will be called for illegal blocking. (Referees will use their judgment to determine if a player running impeded the progress of a defensive player. At times, a player may not be aware that a teammate has crossed the line of scrimmage. Which would result in a no penalty)

F. No-Running Zones(Does not apply to K/1st Grade playing level)

- There are five yard no-running zones on the near side (from the offensive point of view) of the first down marker and end zone. When the line of scrimmage lies within one of these zones, no running plays are allowed. This means that the offense must attempt a forward pass beyond the line of scrimmage. Handoffs are allowed, but must lead to a pass attempt. The one point extra point line is within the no-running zone.

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G. Laterals and Pitches

- No laterals or pitches are allowed once the ball crosses the line of scrimmage. Lateral by definition is sideways or backwards.

H. Handoffs

- Handoffs may occur only behind the line of scrimmage.
- There is no limit on the number of handoffs that may occur during a given play.
- Handoffs may be forward or backward and do not limit the offense's option to throw a subsequent forward pass.
- Handoffs may not occur after a completed forward pass.

I. Special Cases: Running Eligibility After Multiple Handoffs

- In order for a handoff to be considered legal, the player with original possession of the ball (Player A) must completely relinquish control of the ball to another player (Player B).
- The act of placing the ball on the center's back and retrieving it is not considered a legal handoff.

J. Seven Second Rule

- After the ball is snapped, the quarterback has seven seconds to pass or hand-off the ball. If this time expires without a pass or hand-off, the ball shall be returned to the line of scrimmage and the down shall be lost. As soon as the quarterback no longer has possession, the seven second rule ceases to apply, even if the quarterback gains possession of the ball again.

K. Passing

- No more than one forward pass is allowed beyond the line of scrimmage on the same play. All players (including the quarterback) are eligible receivers.

L. Blocking

- **Blocking is not allowed.** If an offensive player moves and impedes the progress of a defender who is making an attempt to pull the ball carrier's flag, an illegal blocking penalty shall be assessed.

M. Receiving

- A completion results when the receiver has control of the ball with at least one foot in bounds. If a receiver catches a pass while not wearing a flag belt, the ball shall be down at the point of the catch.
- Offensive players are not allowed to intentionally bat a passed ball forward to a teammate. A pass that is intentionally batted forward (in the referee's judgment) that is caught by an offensive player shall be ruled as an incomplete pass.
- In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.

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- Interceptions are returnable. If returned for a score during regular game play, the score will be worth six points, two points if returned during conversions and/or overtime.

N. Motion

- No more than one offensive player at a time is allowed to be in motion, and an offensive player in motion may not move toward the line of scrimmage while the ball is being snapped.

VII. Defense:

A. Flag Pulling

- To stop the ball carrier, the defensive player must remove the flag or force (without contact) him/her out of bounds.
- No intentional contact is allowed. This includes tackling, pushing, grasping, and bumping. This also includes touching the face or head in any way or contacting a passer's arm or the ball while he/she is holding the ball.
- Incidental contact to the ball carrier's body while reaching for the flag belt is not a violation.
- If a ball carrier's flag falls off without being touched, he/she is down at the spot it touched the ground.

B. Rushing the Quarterback

- Any defensive player is eligible to rush the quarterback if he/she is behind the rushing line when the ball is snapped. The rushing line is marked by the official and is seven yards from the line of scrimmage. This seven-yard distance applies even if the first down line or goal line is less than seven yards from the line of scrimmage.
- Any number of players may rush the quarterback, provided they comply with the listed restrictions.
- When the ball leaves the quarterback's hands (for a handoff or pass), then all defensive players immediately become eligible to rush, regardless of whether they lined up behind the rush line.
- Teams are not required to rush the quarterback with the seven second clock in effect.
- Teams are not required to identify their rusher before the play.

C. Change of Possession

- A team failing to advance beyond the first down marker or into the end zone after four downs loses possession of the ball. The opposing team takes possession on its own five yard line.
- An intercepted pass results in a change of possession and may be returned until the ball is dead. The line of scrimmage then moves to the point at which the ball was ruled down.

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D. Dead Ball - The ball shall be declared dead when:

- The ball touches the ground. Fumbles are a dead ball.
- Any part of the ball carrier other than hands or feet touches the ground
- A run is attempted from a no-running zone
- The ball carrier's flag belt falls off or is removed
- The ball carrier scores
- The ball carrier steps out of bounds
- The seven second clock expires

VIII. Score Values

A. Touchdown: 6 points

B. Point after touchdown

- From 5 yards: 1 point
- From 10 yards: 2 points

C. Safety: 2 points

D. Extra point attempt (whether from 5 or 10 yards) returned to opposing end zone: 2 points

IX. Tie Games

A. Games ending in a tie will be settled by a longest-yard tie-breaker.

B. Each team will have one play from their own five yard line to gain as many yards as possible. The team gaining the most yards will be declared the winner.

C. In the event that a team loses yardage or is assessed a penalty on their play, their yardage will be marked as zero. A team cannot have negative yardage on their play. If any defensive gets a safety, this counts as two points, and the game is over.

X. Ejections

A. At the official's discretion, a player may be ejected from the field for unsportsmanlike conduct or any flagrant violation of the rules. To eject a player, the official shall notify the coach, who is responsible for removing the player within two minutes to avoid a forfeit.

B. Any player ejected may be put on probation with possible suspension, depending upon the severity of incident. SCVAA Football shall have full discretion when imposing penalties.

C. Our league is intended to provide a family-oriented environment for the enjoyment of children. All coaches, players, and spectators are expected to show good sportsmanship at all times. SCVAA Football, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to eject, suspend, or dismiss anyone for any inappropriate behavior.

XI. Forfeits

A. If a team cannot field at least four players, the game will be forfeit. If a team is more than 10 minutes late for their game start time, the game will be forfeit. B. The score of a forfeited game shall be 7-0.

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XII. Penalties

- A. Mouth guards must be worn at all times. (5 yard penalty).
- B. All defensive penalties are five yards, and result in an automatic first-down for the offense.
- C. All offensive penalties are five yards, and result in a loss-of-down for the offense.
- D. Penalties are either imposed from the line of scrimmage or from the point at which the foul occurred.
- E. For penalties that occur before or during (prior to the catch) a legal forward pass, the foul shall be marked from the original line of scrimmage.
- F. Otherwise, the penalty is spotted from the point of the infraction.
- G. The offended team always has the option to decline any penalty.
- H. When the penalty is greater than the distance to the goal line, it shall be assessed half the distance to the goal line.
- I. A period of play cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense chooses to decline it. In the event of a defensive penalty that is not declined at the end of a half, the offense receives another un-timed play (along with an extra point attempt, if they score).
- J. Flag obstruction – All jerseys **MUST** be tucked in before play begins. The flags must be on the player's hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered

XIII. Possible Ejection (at Official's Discretion) in Addition to Penalty:

- A. Flagrant Unsportsmanlike Conduct
- B. Flagrant Personal Fouls (especially Tackling, Pass Interference, and Charging)
- C. Intentionally Tampering with Equipment

XIV. Possible Warnings (at Official's Discretion) in Addition to Penalty:

The referee has the ability to warn a player for unsportsmanlike conduct, and require the player to sit out a specified number of plays, or for the remainder of the half.

XV. Offensive Penalties - 5 Yards from Line of Scrimmage and Loss of Down

- A. Delay of Game
- B. Off-Sides
- C. False Start
- D. Illegal Motion
- E. Illegal Blocking
- F. Attempting to Run From a No-running Zone
- G. Offensive Pass Interference
- H. Interference by a Coach on the Field
- I. Too Many Players on the Field
- J. Equipment Violation
- K. Unsportsmanlike Conduct (See examples below)
 - Using Profanity, Taunting, or Using Insulting or Vulgar Language or Gestures
 - Disrespectfully Addressing any Person
 - Holding an Unauthorized Conference or Being on the Field Illegally
 - Intentionally Contacting an Official
 - Fighting

XVI. Offensive Penalties - 5 Yards from the Spot of the Infraction, loss (consumption) of down

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- A. Flag Guarding
- B. Diving (when running with the ball)
- C. Charging (depending on degree)
- D. Flag guarding by the Quarterback or ball carrier occurring in his or her own end-zone will result in a safety.

XVII. Defensive Penalties - 5 Yards from the Line of Scrimmage, Automatic First Down

- A. Defensive Pass Interference (Automatic First Down)
- B. Roughing the Passer
- C. Removing Receiver's Flag Belt Before he/she Contacts the Ball
- D. Tackling, Hitting, or Shoving the Ball Carrier
- E. Obstructing or Holding the Ball Carrier F. Illegally Rushing the Quarterback
- G. Unsportsmanlike Conduct
- H. Spiking, Kicking, or Inappropriately Throwing the Ball
- I. Spiking or Throwing Flag
- J. Unsportsmanlike Conduct
- K. Using Profanity, Taunting, or Using Insulting or Vulgar Language or Gestures L. Disrespectfully Addressing any Person
- M. Holding an Unauthorized Conference or Being on the Field Illegal
- N. Stripping or Attempting to Strip the Ball
- O. Intentionally Contacting an Official
- P. Fighting
- Q. Too Many Players on the Field
- R. Equipment Violation
- S. On extra-points only, pass interference occurring in the end-zone will result in a successful extra point conversion. Pass interference occurring in the end-zone during the regular course of play will result in a five yard penalty from the original line of scrimmage, and an automatic first-down.

XVIII. Defensive Penalties - 5 Yards from the Spot of the Infraction, Automatic First Down

- A. Holding

Last Man Rule

In the event that the defensive player commits a flagrant holding penalty and there are no other defensive players between the offensive player and the end-zone, the referee has the discretion to credit the offensive player with a touchdown (or extra point conversion). In the event that the defensive team intercepts an extra-point conversion attempt, and the defensive player is flagrantly held by the (original) offensive player, two points shall be credited to the (original) defensive team.

Appealing - There is no mechanism to challenge a judgment call by an official. The official's judgment is final.

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Game Day Pre-Game:

- B. SCVAA Board and referees will assist in setting up the fields: mid field, no run zone, and end zone markers.
- C. Attempt to have players at games at least 10 minutes before game time so that games are started on time.
- D. Each team may practice immediately before the game, but should not interfere with another game in progress or another (non-flag) activity).

COVID-19 Guidelines:

- Stay home if you are sick or someone you have been in contact with is sick.

PLAYER GUIDANCE

- Do not share towels, flags, water bottles, gloves or other things they use to wipe their faces or hands.
- Attempt to maintain 6 feet of distancing from other players when on the sideline.
- Do not spit. Keep mouth guard inserted at all times if possible.
- Do not share your issued flag belt with other players.
- Wash your jersey after each game week.