

2022 Fall Flag Football Rules

REGISTRATION

All players register to play at <https://www.cogran.io/index.html?hyp#/>

If an athlete has trouble registering online, they must contact sports@hyp.org prior to registration closing to join a team. Communication must be received no later than 11:59 P.M. on the date of registration closing to be considered. Players may not be added to a team after registration closes for any reason*. Any team found to be playing with unregistered players will be subject to the forfeit of matches in which the unregistered athlete played.

**Conflicts with late registration and illness/injury additions may be considered depending on approval of the Sports & Fitness Committee.*

DIVISION STRUCTURE

Elite – Should be played by experienced (high school, collegiate) players or very athletic players that are looking for competitive games built around other strong teams. Suggested for teams with 3-6 seasons of HYP Flag Football Experience.

Elimination Playoffs (All-Teams Qualify) as it will be split between a Major and Minor Conference Playoff Bracket. Team trophies will be given out for the winner of each bracket as the Major Conference winner will receive a \$200 gift card to the league sponsor.

Casual – Should be played by recreational players only and allows players new to Flag Football and less experienced players to play a fun game of Flag Football. Suggested for new teams or teams with under 3 seasons of HYP Flag Football Experience.

No playoffs as all teams will play an extra game after the Regular Season against a similarly ranked team for a Bowl Game.

Teams are STRONGLY urged to participate in the division that most appropriately matches their athleticism and competitiveness. This helps create fair, competitive matchups and contributes to overall enjoyment of the league.

TEAM ROSTERS

- There is no maximum number of team members, but teams must have a minimum of 12 players on a roster.
- Teams must have 6-8 players on the field during each game.
 - If a team is playing with (8) players, no more than (5) players can be male.
 - If a team is playing with (6) or (7) players, no more than (4) players can be male.
- Exception (Casual Division): If a team is playing with (7) players, no more than (5)

players can be male.

- A team that has fewer than (2) females must forfeit the game.
- Roster additions can be made after the close of registration in the event of a player's injury or illness or other unexpected reasons. The affected player must contact the Sports & Fitness Committee to make the necessary accommodations. The replacement of the injured player must be replaced with the same gender. The player who will not be on the roster anymore will be removed from the team roster and will be considered an ineligible player.
- Injury substitutions are permitted
- Any unregistered player found by a pre-game roster check will not be allowed to play.
- A team captain may request a roster check during the first half; the roster check occurs during halftime.
- Any ineligible player found by an in-game roster check will result in a forfeit by the team for whom he or she is playing and scored 0-40, and the team's captain is suspended for 1 game.

Any person who has not registered, signed the waiver, and paid the fee to play in the league is not considered a team member. This is a liability for the organization as it is an unfair opportunity for other players in the league.

- **First offense: Team forfeits the game and the team captain is suspended for (1) match.**
- **Second offense: Team forfeits the game and the whole team is suspended for (1) game which results in being ineligible for the Postseason.**

SUBSTITUTE PLAYERS

- A team may pick up a maximum of (2) players from another HYP Flag Football team to reach a maximum of 8 players on the field.
- Teams may only have substitute players from their own division or lower (for example, a Casual Division team may not add a substitute player from the Elite Division, unless the player is registered in both divisions).
- A rostered player who arrives late must immediately replace any substitute players.
- Substitute players cannot be used in playoff games but can be used in Bowl Games for the Casual Division.

TEAM CAPTAINS

Team captains are expected to take an active role in managing their teams. If a team captain is not present for a match, one player will be designated by the team for that game to be Co-Captain. Captains are responsible for:

- Requesting roster checks by game officials before or during the game. (Cannot be

completed after game)

- Making sure all team members are familiar with the rules and applicable league policies.
- Informing the opposing team's captain and game officials of any use of substitute players.
- Discussing calls and rule disputes with game officials in a professional manner.
- Reporting incorrect scores to the Sports & Fitness Committee within 48 hours of their posting. (After 48 hrs. the game score is final)
- Attending the required Captains' Meeting prior to the start of the season. The captain's team will forfeit each of their matches until this requirement is met.

EQUIPMENT AND CLOTHING

All players are required to wear their 2022 Fall HYP Flag Football jersey during game play following the 2nd week of the season. Following the 2nd week of the season, for every player who does not have their jersey, (1) point will be given to the opposing team. If a player's jersey is lost or destroyed, he or she must contact HYP at sports@hyp.org or call the office at 717-257-0406 to purchase a replacement.

- Footballs and "Sonic Boom" flag belts (required for all players) are provided by HYP or participants can bring their own. Teams may play with their own footballs if they are at least "Youth" (ages 12-14) size or larger.
- Players may wear rubber or plastic cleats; metal cleats/spikes are strictly prohibited and will result in an automatic (1) week suspension.
- Gloves may be worn; "Stick-Um" and similar substances are prohibited.
- Towels may be worn at the **front** of the player's waist but must not interfere with an attempted flag pull.
- Flag belts must be worn at the waist outside of clothing with flags positioned at the hips.
- Jerseys may be worn untucked but must not interfere with an attempted flag pull.
- Players may wear skull caps and beanies; brimmed caps are prohibited.
- Players may wear safety eyewear if a doctor's note is provided.
- For safety reasons, dangling jewelry, personal electronics, and sunglasses (prescription sunglasses excepted) should not be worn. If damages occur, HYP is not liable or responsible.
- Mouth guards are recommended but not required.

START OF THE GAME AND SECOND HALF

Every effort will be made to ensure that matches begin promptly at their scheduled times. Teams that do not have the minimum (6) players at the start of the match are permitted a (10)-minute grace period. After (5) minutes, their opponent is awarded (2) points. A team that still does not have the minimum number of players after the (10)-minute grace period forfeits the game 0-40.

During the regular season, the **Home Team** decides whether to start the match on offense or defense, or which side of the field. The **Away Team** decides whichever option remains. In

playoff games, the higher-seeded team chooses first.

Each half is (20)-minutes long, with a halftime period of up to 5 minutes (both teams may agree to end the halftime period early). Teams swap field direction and possession at the half.

TIMEKEEPING/GAME CLOCK

A game official will keep the official game clock. Outside of the last (2) minutes of each half, the game clock will run continuously, except during team time-outs. Game officials may stop the game clock as needed to address injuries, conduct issues, etc.

The play clock will begin when the ball is spotted, and the offense has (20) seconds to start the next play. If a touchdown is scored after time has expired, the scoring team is allowed a conversation attempt.

Inside of the last (2)-minutes of each half, the game clock stops for the following:

- Player injury (10 seconds will run off the clock if the injured player is on the offensive team)
- After a touchdown and during the conversion attempt
- (2)-minute warning in the first and second half
- Incomplete passes
- When a player carries the ball out of bounds
- Change of possession
- All defensive penalties

“Mercy Rule:” When a team is leading by (30) or more points, the clock will not stop for any reason unless the point differential goes back under 30 points.

PLAYING FIELD

- The playing field is 100 yards long and 40 yards wide.
- There will be 3 sets of first down markers on the field, one at each 1/4 length of the field.
- A dotted line on both sides of the sideline indicates the boundary behind which players and spectators must remain. This space is intended to give game officials room to follow gameplay along the sideline, and to avoid collisions with players going out of bounds.

GAMEPLAY

For the safety and enjoyment of all participants, HYP Flag Football is intended to be played with MINIMAL CONTACT. Football is an inherently physical sport, and players should anticipate that incidental contact will occur. Excessive physical play will be penalized, and players who continue to play in an aggressive manner will be ejected and can face additional sanction. Game officials have broad discretion to decide when contact is excessive, and to act to de-escalate conflicts and maintain the safety of the game.

- All offensive possessions at the start of a half or after a score begin from the first set of 1st down markers in the offensive team's end of the field.
- The offense has (4) chances, or “downs” in which to advance the ball beyond the next set of 1st down markers, and the ball **must** be advanced by a female player on at least (1) of the four plays. Successfully doing so gives the offense a “first down” and another set of chances to advance the ball.
- On 4th down, the offense may elect to try for a first down or score, or punt or free-throw to the defense for field position. After a punt or free-throw, the ball is spotted where it first contacts the ground or is touched.
- Defensive players stop an advancing offensive ball-carrier by pulling a flag off the player’s flag belt.
 - When a player’s flag is pulled, the ball is spotted **where the flag was pulled**.
- A player that accidentally loses a flag(s) before or during a play may advance the ball, but that player is down when a defensive player touches him or her with at least (1) hand. **However, a player must be wearing a flag belt.**
- A player is considered down if anything but a foot or a hand touches the ground (including the ball).
- The defense can take possession away by intercepting a passed or pitched ball.
- There are no “fumbles”; the ball is “dead” when it touches the ground and the play is over. **Losing possession of the ball beyond the line of scrimmage will result in an immediate dead ball, and the ball is spotted where the ball carrier’s flags were when he or she lost possession. Losing possession of the snap will result in the ball being placed behind the line of scrimmage where the ball lands.**

INADVERTENT WHISTLE

The play is over on any whistle. An inadvertent whistle (whistle blown before flags pulled) results in a dead ball, with the benefit going to the team with possession of the ball at the time of the whistle. The team with possession will choose to either replay the down or have the ball spotted where the runner was at the time of the whistle with no loss in down. If an inadvertent whistle stops play after a turnover, the turnover stands.

PENALTIES

Game officials signify penalties by tossing a yellow flag onto the field. Game officials have discretion to call a “flagrant” penalty if an infraction was unnecessarily physical, aggressive, avoidable, or otherwise objectionable. Players who are called for a flagrant penalty will be issued an Unsportsmanlike Conduct Infraction (see Sportsmanship Policy). See the Glossary of Penalties below.

SCORING

- A player scores a touchdown by crossing the opponent’s goal line with possession of the ball, or by catching a pass in the opponent’s end zone.

- A touchdown scored by a male player is worth (6) points.
- A touchdown scored by a female player is worth (8) points (to count as a female touchdown, a female player must have advanced the ball as a runner, receiver, or passer).
- After a touchdown is scored, the offense attempts to convert another scoring play worth (1) or (2) points.
 - Conversion from the (5)- yard line is worth (1) point.
 - Conversion from the (10)-yard line is worth (2) points.
 - The defense can score a touchdown by returning an interception to the opponent's end zone.
 - An interception returned for a score on a conversion attempt is worth (2) points.
 - The defense can score a "safety" worth (2) points by pulling an offensive player's flag while they are inside their own end zone. The scoring team also gains offensive possession at their first set of 1st down markers.
 - If an offensive player commits a penalty while in his or her own end zone, the defense is awarded a safety and possession.

OFFENSE

- All plays must start in shotgun formation.
- The offense must line up with at least (4) players on the line of scrimmage (anywhere across the entire width of the field).
- Once the center has placed his or her hands on the ball, all offensive players must remain behind the football.
- Players should check with the game official to ensure they are lined up legally.
- Play begins when the ball is snapped. Ball must be on the ground when snapped.
- Only (1) player may be in motion at the snap, and he or she may not be moving toward the line of scrimmage at the time of the snap.
- A female player must advance the ball past the line of scrimmage once every (4) downs. This can occur as a rusher, a receiver, or a passer.
- **In the interest of promoting player safety, players may not dive head-first or leap to advance the ball or avoid a flag pull.**

RUSHING, PITCHING, AND HANDOFFS

- Only female players may run the ball immediately after receiving a handoff or pitch.
- A male player who receives the direct snap, or via a handoff or pitch may run the ball only after a defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage.
- After a pitch or handoff, any defensive player may cross the line of scrimmage.

PASSING AND RECEIVING

- The passer must be behind the line of scrimmage when throwing a forward pass.
- All offensive players are eligible to receive passes, including the quarterback after the ball has been handed off.

A catch is considered a completed pass when:

- The receiver retains possession of the ball after his or her flag has been pulled, or after contacting the ground.

- The receiver contacts the ground with at least (1) foot in-bounds with the ball in their possession.

If a receiver jumps to catch a pass and is knocked or pushed out of bounds by an opposing player before landing, the pass is ruled complete and the ball will be spotted at the point where the flag of the receiver went out of bounds. A 15-yard penalty for unnecessary roughness may be assessed on the defensive player.

If a pass is caught simultaneously by an offensive and defensive player, the “tie” goes to the offensive player and the pass is ruled complete.

BLOCKING

Although blocking is an important strategic element of the game of football, in order to promote player safety, blocking is permitted only in a limited fashion. Players should avoid initiating contact with other players where possible. Intentional, unnecessary contact will be penalized, and repeat offenses will incur additional disciplinary action.

Pass-blocking – Players on offense may “pass block” to impede a pass rusher's path to the quarterback but may not extend their arms to shove a defender. Blitzers should make a reasonable effort to avoid collisions with pass-blockers. **Blockers can either have their hands extended directly in front of them or at their chest with elbows tucked at their sides. No chicken wings (elbows extended to the side w/ hands at chest) or hands extended to their sides.**

Downfield-blocking – Players on offense may run downfield with a ball-carrier (to be in a position to receive a pitch back, for example) but may not impede or obstruct a defensive player’s path to the ball-carrier.

DEFENSE

- Defensive players may line up anywhere in front of the line of scrimmage.
- A “blitzer” is any defensive player who crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed, pitched, or handed off.
- Blitzers must line up at least (5) yards in front of the line of scrimmage. Blitzers should check with the game official to ensure they are lined up legally.
- **An emphasis on no bull rushing by blitzers. No ripping or swim moves. The game is intended to be as minimal contact as possible.**
- Only (2) defensive players may blitz in the Casual Division.
- Defensive players inside the 5-yard buffer may cross the line of scrimmage after the ball is passed, pitched or handed off behind the line of scrimmage.
- In the Casual Division a male defensive player cannot line up on the line of scrimmage directly across from a female player. He must line up beyond the 5-yard blitz line.
- “Last Man Back Rule”: If a game official determines that the last defensive player in a position to make a play commits a penalty that prevents the offense from scoring, they may award the offense the score.
- **Flags are not to be pulled by a defender prior to an offensive player possessing the ball.**

OVERTIME (PLAYOFFS ONLY)

If the score is tied at the end of regulation, the game will go into overtime only for Playoffs, not for Bowl Games. The higher seeded team will choose which team has first possession, and the lower seeded team will choose which side of the field the period will be played on. Each team will have an equal number of overtime possessions. Teams begin the offensive possession on the 20-yard line and have 4 plays to score. If they score, they must go for a (2)-point conversion.

STANDINGS

- Scores will be posted, and standings updated on <https://www.teamlinkt.com/> within a day after games are completed.
- Captains have 48 hours after scores are posted to report an incorrect score. After 48 hours, all scores and standings are final.
- Team standings are determined by the following, in order:
 - Overall winning percentage
 - Head-to-Head record
 - Lowest total points allowed
 - Least number of forfeits for the season
 - Most points scored
 - Coin Toss

PLAYOFFS

ELITE DIVISION – All teams will qualify for playoffs but will be split up into a Major and Minor Conference Playoff Bracket to compete in an elimination tournament.

- For example, #1-#7 will compete in the Major Conference Bracket while #8-#15 will participate in the Minor Conference Bracket.
- Both division winners of the tournament will receive a team trophy.
- The Major Conference champion receives a \$200 gift card to league sponsor (Arooga's).

CASUAL DIVISION: No playoffs as all teams will play an extra game after the Regular Season against a similarly ranked team for a Bowl Game. The #1 team who finished best in the standings will be awarded 2 Bowl Games against the #2 and #3 teams to have fun and be rewarded by playing an extra game.

CANCELLATIONS AND MAKE-UP GAMES

Flag Football games will be played in cold temperatures, windy and rainy weather. Games will be canceled if the weather is severe or unsafe to drive in. Please be prepared to play every game until an announcement has been made! Once a game begins it is up to the game officials and the HYP Executive Board to decide when a game should be called. HYP will communicate with captains via email to inform them about future makeup games.

Games in-progress may be canceled due to unsafe weather conditions. If a game is canceled with less than 10 minutes remaining in the 2nd half, the game is recorded as final. Otherwise the make-up game will be replayed from the beginning.

Game officials are empowered to end a game early as a last-resort measure to deescalate ongoing player misconduct issues. Any game ended under such circumstances will be reported to and reviewed by HYP's Board of Directors. Any changes to the standings resulting from the Board's decision will be communicated to team captains.

RULE CHANGES

Should circumstances justify a change to any rules or policies that will improve the game experience for all players, the Fitness and Sports Committee reserves the authority to affect rule changes up until the start of the second half of the season (Sunday, April 19, 2022). Proposed rule changes will be disseminated to team captains for comment, and if agreed upon, implemented by the following week.

RULE ENFORCEMENT AND CONDUCT

- Players are responsible for understanding and abiding by the rules of the game.
- Calls made by game officials are final.
- Unsportsmanlike behavior, such as taunting or antagonizing opponents and using foul or abusive language, will not be tolerated. Players who engage in such behavior will be subject to disciplinary action according to the guidelines set forth in the HYP Sportsmanship Policy.
- Game officials and HYP staff members are authorized to remove any disruptive player or guest from the premises.
- **Harrisburg Young Professionals is committed to providing a safe environment for all sports participants, including players, guests, staff, and game officials. All participants are encouraged to report unacceptable conduct (including but not limited to verbal abuse, harassment on social media, and threatening language) to HYP's Board of Directors. Players who engage in such behavior may be suspended for the remainder of the season or longer where appropriate as determined by the Board.**

FIELD PREPARATION

Any registered HYP member who volunteers to help the Sports & Fitness Committee for the season and has their time documented on the Committee's volunteer spreadsheet, may receive a full refund of their registration fee for their commitment to our sports leagues. Please reach out to sports@hyp.org or call the office at 717-257-0406 if you would like to volunteer.

FACILITIES

Maintenance of 7th and Radnor Park (owned by Harrisburg City Department of Recreation) and the Harrisburg City school grounds including William Penn and Camp Curtain (Harrisburg City School District) is the responsibility of their respective owners.

As a civic organization, Harrisburg Young Professionals encourages good citizenship of its representative members and sports league participants. Picking up trash (especially if it is not your own) helps create a more pleasant game experience for other league participants and promotes a more cooperative relationship between HYP and the community organizations with

whom we partner.

WAIVER OF LIABILITY & SPORTSMANSHIP POLICY

All participants must complete an HYP Sports League Waiver of liability form and Sportsmanship Policy. All participants in the league assume the risk of injury. HYP, its volunteers, and employees shall not be liable for injury to a person, loss or damage to personal property arising from, or in any way resulting from, participation in the league. *(Harrisburg Young Professionals is not responsible for any lost or stolen equipment, bottles, clothing, or etc.)*

HYP SPORTS ALCOHOL POLICY

Harrisburg Young Professionals strives to provide players and guests with a safe, alcohol-free game experience that is family-friendly, social, and competitive. HYP partners with sponsoring bars to provide a social environment for participants and guests to enjoy alcohol responsibly **after the game**. It is HYP's policy that all players and guests must comply with all applicable laws and ordinances regarding the possession and consumption of alcohol. [Harrisburg City Department of Recreation](#) and [Harrisburg School District](#) both prohibit the possession and consumption of alcohol on their respective premises. Failure to adhere to these policies jeopardizes HYP's access to those facilities, and anyone found to be in violation of this policy will be asked to leave the premises. Players and guests who appear to be under the influence of alcohol or other controlled substance will similarly be asked to leave. Players who violate the HYP Sports Alcohol Policy may be referred to HYP's Board of Directors for additional sanction.

SUMMARY OF FEMALE RULES

This section is intended to add detail to the rules regarding female players. It will be amended as necessary to provide as thorough an explanation of these rules as possible.

Rushing – A “rushing play” is defined as a play during which a player receives the ball behind the line of scrimmage via direct snap, handoff, or lateral/pitch, and proceeds to run up-field to gain yardage. Female players may “rush” the ball at any time. Male players may not carry the ball past the line of scrimmage under any circumstances before a defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage.

Female Advancement – In order to satisfy the “female advancement” requirement for earning a First Down, a female player must possess the ball during the advancement of the play beyond the line of scrimmage. Advancement occurs via a completed forward pass thrown or caught by a female player, or as a rusher.

The play must also result in a net positive yardage. For example, if a female player rushes the ball beyond the line of scrimmage, pitches the ball back to a male player behind the line of scrimmage, whose flag is immediately pulled while behind the line of scrimmage, the play results in a net loss of yardage and does not count as “female advancement”.

Female Scoring – In order to earn (8) points for a female scoring play, a female player must possess the ball during the play and be directly involved in taking it into the end zone. This is satisfied by a completed forward pass by a female quarterback that is caught in or taken into the end zone, a completed reception by a female receiver that is caught in or taken into the end zone, or any other play during which a female player carries the ball into the end zone.

Miscellaneous – Each team must always have a minimum of two female players on the field.

In the Casual Division a male defensive player cannot line up on the line of scrimmage directly across from a female player. He must line up beyond the 5-yard blitz line.

Glossary of Penalties

DELAY OF GAME (5 Yards, replay down): Offense fails to snap the ball within 20 seconds of the ball being spotted. Defensive player interferes with the ball being returned to the game official for spotting.

FLAG GUARDING (10 yards from line of scrimmage, replay down): Ball carrier impedes a defender's attempted flag pull with a hand or improperly worn belt, jersey or towel.

HOLDING (Offensive: 10 yards, replay down - Defensive: 5 yards, automatic first down): Player impedes an opponent by holding onto any part of their body, clothing, or flag belt.

ILLEGAL FORMATION (5 yards, replay down): Player on offense is lined up with fewer than 4 players on the line of scrimmage. Offense or defense has more than 5 males or more than 8 total players on the field.

OFFSIDES (5 yards, replay down): Player on offense or defense is lined up in the neutral zone when the ball is snapped.

ILLEGAL FORWARD PASS (10 yards, replay down): Player on offense throws a forward pass from beyond the line of scrimmage.

PASS INTERFERENCE (Offensive: 10 yards, loss of down - Defensive: spot foul, automatic first down): Player initiates contact to hinder or prevent an opponent from catching a forward pass.

ILLEGAL DOWNFIELD BLOCK (10 yards from line of scrimmage, replay down): Player on offense initiates contact to obstruct/impede a defender from reaching the ball-carrier.

DIVING (10 yards from spot, loss of down): Ball carrier dives head-first or leaps to advance the ball or avoid flag pull.

SIDELINE INFRACTION (5 yards, replay down): Spectator or player not on game field encroaches into the defined sideline boundary during active play.

ILLEGAL BLITZ (5 yards, replay down): Defensive player blitzes from within the prescribed 5-yard blitz line.

UNNECESSARY ROUGHNESS (15 yards, automatic first down if on defense):

Unnecessarily physical or aggressive actions including but not limited to intentionally contacting another player, extending of hands into another player, "checking" a receiver at the line of scrimmage, tackling, "stripping" the ball out of the carrier's hands, and "bull-rushing" (unnecessarily aggressive blitzing). Offending player is issued an Unsportsmanlike Conduct Infraction.

UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT: (15 yards, automatic first down if on defense): Behavior that includes (but is not limited to) taunting, cheating, excessive arguing with game officials, excessive profanity, sexist, racist, or threatening language, and other behavior that violates the league Sportsmanship Policy. Offending player is issued an Unsportsmanlike Conduct

Infraction and may be deemed for more actions based on review of its report.

Note: Defensive penalty yardage that moves the line of scrimmage across a set of first down markers always results in a first down.