

FLAG FOOTBALL

League Rules



EDMONTON **SPORT** & **SOCIAL** CLUB

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1. GAMES COORDINATORS

A Games Coordinator (GC) is a part-time employee hired by the ESSC to facilitate games. **The GC is not a trained referee.** Players are expected to respect the GC, their opponents and the rules of the sport.

ROLES OF THE GC

- **Facility Liaison**
 - Act as the onsite contact, set-up and take-down required equipment
- **Game Facilitator and Mediator**
 - Start and end the game on time
 - Host pre-game and half-time meetings
 - Call violations and fouls that are missed by players, enforce the rules of the sport
 - Ensure both teams are abiding by the Sportsmanship policy, mediate disputes
- **Player Liaison**
 - Represent the ESSC and act as a link between the players and the league
- **Game Reporter**
 - Record and announce the score throughout the game, report back to the ESSC
 - Collect spirit ratings at the end of the game from each team.

GC NO-SHOWS OR ABSENCES

Although the ESSC strives to have a GC present and on-time for all games, there could be rare instances where a GC is unexpectedly late or does not show up to their shift. If this occurs;

- Set the field up as required
- Start, play, and end the game as scheduled
- Email the score and sportsmanship ratings to info@edmontonsportsclub.com

2. FIELD REQUIREMENTS

League	Total # of Players Required on the Court	Minimum # of F Players Required on the Court	Maximum # of M/X Players Allowed on the Court
Co-ed	5	2	3
Men's	5	0	5

The ESSC welcomes people of all gender identity or expression. Minimum female player requirements are inclusive of *anyone* who identifies as a female (i.e. players who identify themselves as M and X will not count towards female player minimums).

3. DEFAULT MINIMUMS & SCORES

Format	Minimum Players to Avoid Default	Default Score
Co-ed	4 (1 Female)	0-35
Men's	4	0-35

4. FORMAT & EQUIPMENT

GAME FORMAT

- Players should arrive 15 minutes prior to the scheduled game time
- Teams will play two games per night
- Each game will be 45 minutes in length:
 - Two 20-minute halves
 - 5-minute half-time
 - With 30 seconds left in each half, the GC will announce 'final play'.

SCORING

- There are two methods of scoring points in Flag Football:
 - **Touchdown:** 6 points
 - **Convert:** Occurs immediately following a touchdown
 - If successful from the 5-yard line – results in 1 point
 - If successful from the 10-yard line – results in 2 points
- Mercy is called and the score freezes if a team gains a 35-point lead
- **Regular Season:** Ties are allowed
- **Playoffs:** Ties are not allowed: If the score is tied at the end of regulation play, an overtime period will be used to determine a winner. Overtime format, is as follows:
 - Teams can use any suitable means (like rock, paper, scissors) to determine which team starts with possession
 - Each team will take turns getting one play from the defense's 5-yard line for one point or the defense's 10-yard line for two points. Whether to go for one or two points is up to the offensive team. Whether or not the team that begins on offense converts their attempt, the team that started on defense also gets a chance on offense to win or tie by converting a one- or two-point play of their own.
 - **Example:** Team A starts on offense and chooses to go for one point from the 5-yard line and is successful. Team B is then on offense and can choose to either go for one point from the 5-yard line to tie and force a second round of overtime or to go for two points from the 10-yard line for the win.
 - If the second team on offense in an overtime round fails to beat or match the team that went first, the team that went first wins.
 - Starting with the 2nd overtime (and any subsequent overtime), both teams must "go for two" from the 10-yard line.

EQUIPMENT

- Metal cleats are not permitted in ESSC Flag Football Leagues
- Players should bring a light and dark shirt to each game
- The GC will provide all of the flags and belts
 - Flags must be worn at the hips or sides of the body, and cannot be obscured by a shirt
- The GC will provide the warm-up and game footballs, which are NFL-sized (not CFL)

5. GAME PLAY

STARTING & RE-STARTING PLAY

SUBSTITUTIONS

- Substitutions can only be made in the following scenarios:
 - Before the start of an offensive or defensive series
 - Between plays within a given series
 - After a touchdown, convert, or scoring play
 - At half-time
 - To replace an injured player

START OF PLAY

- Teams can use any suitable means (like rock, paper, scissors) to determine which team has the choice of two privileges to start the first half:
 - The opportunity to start with possession or defer possession to the opposing team
 - The choice of field side
- If the winning team does not defer, the opposition must choose from the remaining options
 - The opposition will then have first choice of privileges to open the second half
- If the winning team defers, the opposition must choose their privilege first, and the winning team will choose from the remaining options
 - The winning team will then have the first choice of privileges to open the second half.
- The offensive team will start each possession on their own 5-yard line.

LINE OF SCRIMMAGE RULES

- The ball should always be centered on the field to start a down
- The offensive team will consist of a quarterback and four receivers
- The quarterback can snap the ball themselves, or take a shotgun snap from a teammate
- Receiver motion is allowed on the offensive side of the ball prior to the football being snapped.
- The offensive team has 7-downs, or plays from the line of scrimmage, in which to score
 - There are no first-downs in Flag Football
 - If the offensive team does not score during their 7-downs, the result is a turnover, and the defensive team will gain possession at the spot of the last down
- **The offensive team must put the ball into play within 20 seconds of starting their huddle**
- **A female player must be an integral part of the play in at least one down during the first four downs of the series:**
 - The following scenarios count as an integral part of the play:
 - Playing quarterback on a forward passing play
 - Being the intended receiver on a passing play
 - Receiving a lateral on a play

- If a team scores during the first, second, or third play of the series, the score counts, regardless of whether a female was an integral part of the play
- Series consisting of four plays or longer would require a female to be an integral part of the play for any score to count
- If a female is not used during the first four plays of the series, it's a turnover of downs.

OFFENCE

PASSING

- A forward pass may not be thrown if the ball has been advanced beyond the line of scrimmage
- For a forward pass, underhand pitches are allowed
- Only one forward pass may be thrown on each play
- Teams are permitted an unlimited number of laterals (sideways or backwards passes) on any given play
- Only the player that takes the snap from the center, or snaps the ball to themselves, is allowed to make a forward pass.

RUNNING THE BALL

- Direct handoffs or pitches are permitted behind the line of scrimmage only
- The quarterback cannot run past the line of scrimmage. If a quarterback is rushed, they are permitted to scramble behind the line of scrimmage, but cannot run past the line of scrimmage with the ball

RECEIVING

- All players on the field are considered eligible receivers
- When making a catch, the first point of contact with the ground determines whether the catch is complete:
 - If the ball makes contact with the ground before the receiver has control, it is an incomplete pass
 - If the receiver is touching the boundary line, or is out-of-bounds at first point of contact, the catch does not count (unless contact from a defender forced the receiver out of bounds in mid-air)
 - If the receiver touches inside of the boundary line but is carried out-of-bounds by their momentum, the catch is good
 - The receiver only needs one foot planted in-bounds while possessing the ball for it to be a completion
 - A receiver is 'down' at the spot where their flag is pulled
 - A receiver must be entirely in the end-zone before being flagged for the score to count
- A receiver is allowed to bobble the ball before making a catch, but cannot use controlled bobbling to advance the ball forwards up the field of play
- **There are no fumbles in ESSC Flag Football Leagues**
 - If a player drops the football after gaining full possession, the play is immediately dead (down is complete) at that spot and the offence retains possession

BLOCKING AND PICK-PLAYS

- All ESSC Flag Football Leagues are non-contact
- Blocking by the offence is never permitted (line of scrimmage, post-reception)
 - The ball carrier is permitted to use stationary teammates as blocks, as long as they were ahead of the ball carrier to start the play, and are not moving while blocking
 - It is the responsibility of the offensive player to avoid the rushing defender, they may not impede the rusher in any way
- Pick-plays are not permitted by the offensive team
 - For a play to be considered a 'pick' an imminent collision or physical contact must have occurred
 - Crossing patterns are permitted by receivers as long as no contact is made with the defenders

DEFENCE

STEAMBOAT COUNTING

- The defensive team will count steamboats
 - 1 steamboat = 1 second
 - The count always starts at 1-steamboat, even if the defensive team forgot to start counting earlier
- If not rushed by the defensive team, the offensive team still only has a 5-steamboat count to make a play

RUSHING THE QUARTERBACK

- Teams are permitted to rush the quarterback
- Defensive players must be at least 10 yards away from the line of scrimmage
 - If a defensive player is within 10 yards of their own endzone, they cannot rush the quarterback
 - If a defensive player is not rushing, they may line up anywhere in excess of 1 yard
- The defensive player must declare their intention to rush the quarterback by raising their hand prior to the play
- If the defensive player declares their intention to rush the quarterback, they must do so. No fake rushes

PULLING FLAGS

- A player is considered "down" in the following scenarios:
 - One or more of the flags from their belt is pulled
 - The player touches the field with their body (from their knee up)
 - Hands are excluded, it is okay to touch the field with your hand
 - The player steps out-of-bounds

- If a player inadvertently loses a flag during a play:
 - The play is dead at the spot of the lost flag, if the player was carrying the ball
 - The play is dead at the spot of the reception, if a receiver catches a pass after losing the flag
 - Play continues if the player was not the ball carrier, or intended receiver

SAFETIES

- If a player is flagged down in their own end-zone
 - The defensive team gains possession at their own 5-yard line and is awarded 2 points

INTERCEPTIONS

- The defensive team can intercept a forward pass or lateral from the offensive team
- An interception can be returned for a score (touchdown)
- If the defensive team intercepts a convert attempt and scores, they will be awarded as many points as the offensive team was attempting (1 or 2)
- If an interception occurs in the end-zone and the player is flagged down, a touchback will occur, and the intercepting team will gain possession on the 10-yard line

VIOLATIONS & FOULS

VIOLATIONS

Violations are intentional or unintentional rule infractions. A violation may result in the re-playing of a down if the opposing team was put at a disadvantage by the violation. Players are expected to call violations committed by themselves or their team.

- Offside
- Quarterback Crossing the Line of Scrimmage
- Illegal Pass
- Fast Steamboat Counting

FOULS

Fouls are non-malicious physical infractions that occur during gameplay. Players are expected to call fouls committed by themselves or their team.

- If a foul is called, the play is halted:
 - A defensive foul will result in the following choices for the offensive team:
 - Accept - Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage
 - Accept - Play the next down from the spot where the foul occurred
 - Decline - Play the next down from the spot where the previous play concluded
 - An offensive foul will result in the following choices for the defensive team:
 - Accept – Loss of down for the offensive team

- Decline – The result of the previous play stands
- If a foul occurs while the football is in the air, the play is always completed
- If a defensive foul occurs on the 7th down, the offensive team can accept the foul (original line of scrimmage, or spot foul) and replay 7th down

DEFENSIVE INTERFERENCE

- Body contact, holding, pushing
- Screening a receiver (intentionally covering the eyes or blocking their vision)
- Prematurely pulling a flag from an offensive player's belt

OFFENSIVE INTERFERENCE

- Body contact, pushing-off, or any sort of blocking
- Includes pick-plays
- Flag Guarding
 - Includes covering the flags with clothing, using arms or hands to guard the flags, or jumping to avoid being flagged down
- Charging
 - Aggressively running through stationary defenders that are in front of the ball carrier