

# CATHOLIC FLAG FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Diocese of Orange

Office for Youth & Young Adult Ministry

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## Rule Book

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Rules and Regulations Players, Spectators and Referees must follow to be able to participate in the Catholic Flag Football Association league.



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# **GENERAL OVERVIEW:**

## **5V5 COED RULES BOOK**

### **1. Team Rosters**

- a. Teams may carry up to 20 players on their roster. Players may be added through the 5th game of the season. All players must register through the link provided by the coordinator and pay the player registration fee before they are eligible to play. It is the team captain's responsibility to verify that each player has registered and paid the fee before any game is played, the coordinator can also advise the captain. It will be up to the discretion of the league whether or not a player will be allowed to play on multiple teams in one league. Players can play on other teams so as long as both the captain of the player and the team taking on the player agrees upon it.

### **2. The CFFA Grid**

- a. The playing field is 80 yards x 30 yards and consists of a 60-yard field of play and two 10-yard end zones. Yard markers will denote mid-field (the 30-yard line) and both 10-yard lines. End zone pylons will mark the goal line.

### **3. Equipment**

- a. All players must wear the same color shirts/jerseys with permanent numbers on the back. All shirts must be tucked in. Baseball caps may be worn backwards. Jewelry is not allowed. Starting week 2 of the season, teams will be penalized 2 points for each player wearing an illegal jersey/wrong color.
- b. All players should wear cleats (both molded and detachable are allowed). Tennis shoes are acceptable, but are not recommended. Metal cleats are strictly prohibited. Anyone found wearing baseball "spikes" will be ejected from the game.
- c. All players will use official flag belts (provided at the field by the OCCSL). Belts are to be worn around the waist with flags on the hips.

### **4. Scheduling**

- a. CFFA reserves the right to modify the schedule, and will notify affected team captains as soon as possible. Schedule changes will also be posted on the OCCSL website and IM Leagues. Captains and players are encouraged to check the online schedule for changes. Team captains are responsible for notifying their teammates of schedule changes.

### **5. CFFA Code of Conduct**

- a. All players shall respect the calls of the CFFA officials.
- b. Any player involved in fighting will be immediately ejected from the game and subject to further suspension at the discretion of the league coordinator. Games may be "double-forfeited" due to fights. Teams instigating fights will be expelled

from the league. League fees will not be refunded for team expulsion due to fighting.

- c. Unsportsmanlike conduct, including trash talking and rough play will not be tolerated. This is a **FLAG** football league. Anyone not abiding by the CFFA Code of Conduct may be ejected from games and potentially suspended from league play.
- d. No littering! This includes sunflower seeds. Teams must clean up their sideline immediately after their game.
- e. Any player who threatens or abuses (either physically or verbally) an CFFA official before, during or after a game will be suspended from at least 1 week of games. Reinstatement will be determined based on the severity of the incident.
- f. Regardless of whether it is intentional or not, players receiving a second personal foul in the same game will be automatically ejected.
- g. Counting down the five-second play clock out loud is illegal. Officials will give one warning. The second offense is a 15-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.
- h. Captains are responsible for distributing the CFFA rules and Code of Conduct to their team members. Only offensive or defensive captains are allowed to discuss calls and/or decisions with officials during the game.
- i. CFFA Referees have the discretion to penalize players/teams for violations not clearly outlined in the rules (for example, having players sit out a series for a near scuffle, trash talking, etc). The ref's decision is final and binding. Players are expected to respect the ref's calls and act as a responsible adult would. Players in violation of this, place their future playing time in the hands of CFFA Management.
- j. CFFA reserves the right to suspend any particular player(s)/team(s) from any location(s) for an indefinite amount of time. CFFA's goal is to promote a safe, non-violent league for players, their friends and family.

## 6. Game Clock

- a. Games will consist of two 20-minute halves.
- b. Each team may use 3 time outs per half. If a team is leading by more than 28 points in the second half, they may not use their remaining time outs.
- c. The offense has 25 seconds between plays (officials count down time from setting the markers). Delay of game is a penalty (5 yards, replay the down).
- d. The game clock will be kept by an CFFA official and may be stopped at their discretion.
- e. The clock will stop during the last two minutes of the second half if the score is within 14 points (14 points or less) ("Regulation Clock") in the following situations:
  - i. Incomplete passes
  - ii. Receiver steps out of bounds
  - iii. Extra point attempts

- iv. Defensive penalties (excluding offsides)
- v. Quarterback sacks
- vi. "Five-second" penalties
- vii. Turnovers/Changes of possession
- f. During Regulation Clock play, the clock will stop until the ball and markers are set in the following situations:
  - i. First downs
  - ii. Defensive offsides
  - iii. Offensive penalties (excluding quarterback sack and "five-second" penalty).

## **7. Scoring**

- a. Touchdown: 6 points
- b. 5-yard PAT: 1 point
- c. 10-yard PAT: 2 points
- d. Safety: 2 points
- e. Interception return for touchdown on PAT attempt: 2 points

## **8. Forfeits**

- a. A game will be forfeited if a team is unable to start (or complete) a game with at least 4 players.

## **9. Overtime**

- a. If a game is tied at the end of regulation play, a tiebreaker will be played to determine the winner. Captains will meet with the official for a coin toss to determine possession of ball.
- b. Both teams are given 2 plays, with no time outs, from the opponent's 10-yard line (similar to the college football overtime).
- c. If the first team is unsuccessful in scoring, the opposing team takes possession at the 10-yard line and has 2 plays to score. If they score, they win.
- d. If the first team is successful in scoring, they have the option of going for 1 or 2 points. The opposing team then tries their 2 plays to score and, if successful, attempts a conversion to either tie or win the game. If the opposing team does not score a touchdown or does not match the first team's extra points, the game is over and the first team wins.
- e. If an interception occurs during overtime, the defense will take over at the 10 yard line unless the INT is returned for a TD. In this event, the defense will be awarded 6 points and the game will be over.
- f. If the game goes to a 3rd overtime, both teams must attempt 2-point conversions.

## **10. Coin Toss**

- a. Officials will call each team captain for the coin toss prior to the game. Winner of the coin toss chooses to be on either offense or defense. Loser of coin toss decides

direction of ball. After halftime, the teams switch sides. The team that started the game on defense gets the ball.

## **11. Matriculation**

- a. Teams start possession at the 10-yard line (there are no kickoffs). The offense has 4 downs to reach a first down at mid-field (the 30-yard line), then 4 downs for another first down at the 10-yard line. Once inside the 10, the offense only has 3 downs to score a touchdown. If the defense stops the offense from scoring on 4<sup>th</sup> and goal, the ball will be placed on the 10-yard line regardless of where the stop was made.

## **12. Game Play**

- a. There must be at least one player on each side of the center and quarterback. The ball may not be snapped with a “trips” formation. Teams may line up with three receivers on one side, but must motion out of that formation before the snap of the ball.
- b. The receiver must have control of the ball with at least one foot in bounds.
- c. The receiver must not leave their feet (jumping/diving) to avoid a defender. Will result in a 5 yard penalty.
- d. Taking a knee does not stop the clock. Play clock will run until ball carrier is touched by defender.
- e. The quarterback may intentionally ground the football. It is a legal play and there is no penalty.
- f. In the event of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has the option to either replay the down or to take the play at the point the whistle was blown (unless the inadvertent whistle occurs during an interception return, in which case the ball will be spotted where it was when the whistle was blown).
- g. All players are eligible to catch a forward pass so long as they are beyond the line of scrimmage.
- h. The quarterback has 5 seconds to release the ball. Count starts on the snap of the ball. If the ball is not thrown within 5 seconds, it is a 5-yard penalty and loss of down. The 5-second rule is in effect during a muffed snap, which is a live ball and may be recovered by the offense and thrown, or recovered by the defense and returned.
- i. It is illegal for the defensive team to count the five seconds out loud (even from the sidelines). Officials will issue one warning. Teams will be assessed a 15-yard penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct on the second offense.
- j. In the event of a deflected/batted ball by the defender that is caught by the quarterback, he may run with the ball (even though it may be caught behind the line of scrimmage). The quarterback may NOT throw the ball again.

- k. The quarterback can receive the snap from center either from between the center's legs or from a "turn and throw" method where the center may throw the ball to the quarterback from a standing position.
- l. Double passes ("throw backs") are allowed, so long as the first pass is thrown laterally or backwards and the second pass is released prior to the expiration of the five-second play clock. Dropped double passes are down at the spot.
- m. Hand-offs, pitches and laterals are all legal, but may not be advanced beyond the line of scrimmage. The receiver of the hand-off must throw the ball to a receiver beyond the line of scrimmage (or pitch it again). The 5-second rule is in effect and a forward pass must be thrown before the play clock expires.
- n. Hook and ladder plays are legal. A receiver may pitch the ball to another player, so long as the second player is even with, or behind the initial receiver. If the defense intercepts the pitch, it is a live ball and may be returned. If the ball hits the ground, it is dead at the spot.
- o. Flag guarding is illegal. It will result in a 10-yard penalty and loss of down. Flag guarding by the quarterback in the end zone is a safety.
- p. The center may block the pass rusher. There is no blocking in the back and all blocks must be thrown with arms extended. Absolutely no cross-blocking, pull the defender down, holding, or blocks in the back. Other players may block the pass rusher, but there is no down-field blocking on receptions or interceptions. The play will be blown dead and the offending player may be called for an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty at the discretion of the official.
- q. Pass rusher must start at least five yards from line of scrimmage. If the rusher jumps the snap count, he must go back behind the rush mark before continuing to rush the quarterback (but he can still rush). Rusher must go for the quarterback's flags. There is absolutely no stripping or attempting to knock the ball out of the QB's hands. Any player may rush so long as they start beyond 5 yards from the line of scrimmage. In the event of a double pass ("throw-back"), anyone may rush the ball carrier (no 5 yard rule).
- r. Roughing the passer (hit any part of the QB hand) is a 10-yard penalty and an automatic 1st down.
- s. Bull rushing is illegal. The pass rusher must pick a side of the blocker. He may not try to run through the center. The rusher may make contact with his arms fully extended. The rusher may not lower his shoulder into the blocker.
- t. Receivers may not interfere with the pass rusher's path to the quarterback. This is only in effect beyond the line of scrimmage. Receivers may stay back and block the pass rusher so long as they engage the rusher behind the line of scrimmage.

- u. "Canning" (blocking, bumping, checking, etc.) the center is not allowed unless the center crosses the line of scrimmage.
- v. "Bump & run" coverage is allowed by defense as long as the initial bump occurs within one yard of the line of scrimmage. This bump may continue for 5 yards. The receiver may use release moves to escape the bump. All checking/bumping must be done with extended arms and open hands, between the waist and shoulders. Contact to the receivers head or face is strictly prohibited. Defensive holding is a penalty. If the receiver is bumped out of bounds, he may reenter the field of play, but may not be the first player to touch the ball or it is an incomplete pass.
- w. The defender cannot contact the receiver beyond 5 yards, or when the ball is in the air. Face guarding is a pass interference penalty. The defender must turn and look for the ball. Pass Interference in the end zone will result in 1st and goal at the one-yard line.
- x. There is absolutely no stripping of the ball allowed. Players must attempt to pull the ball carrier's flags. The defender may knock the ball away as a receiver is trying to establish possession, but once the ball is secured, it may not be stripped.
- y. Interceptions are live and may be returned. One pitch or lateral is allowed on an interception return. An interception in the end zone – or inside the 10-yard line – and not advanced beyond the 10-yard line will be spotted at the 10.
- z. Fumbles are blown dead at the spot of the fumble. There is no change of possession (no piling on).
- aa. Offensive offsides are a dead ball penalty. Five yards, replay the down.
- bb. Defensive offsides are a "free play" for the offense. Five yards, replay the down (or take the result of the play).
- cc. If a ball carrier falls to the ground without being contacted by a defensive player, he may get up and run, unless touched while down.
- dd. All offensive players must be set for one second before the snap. Only one player may be in motion at the snap. Motion must be lateral (no forward motion). If two or more players shift, they must be set for one second before the snap.
- ee. If the last defender available to make a play on a ball carrier holds, pushes, tackles, or in any way impedes the offensive player's progress without pulling the flags, the result of the play is a touchdown, unless declined by the offense. It is a judgement call by the official.
- ff. There is no kicking in the OCCSL Flag Football league. If the offense declares a "punt" on 4th (or any) down, the ball will automatically be placed on the opponent's 10-yard line. If the offense elects to punt, then decides not to, a time out will be charged to that team. If the team has no time-outs left, they must punt.
- gg. OUTLAWED PLAYS



- i. A QB cannot throw a forward pass to himself. It has to be at least touched by a player on the offense or defense (with some intent of doing so).
  - ii. The QB cannot bounce the pass off the centers back and run with it as a completed pass. Both of these calls will result in an incomplete pass and are at the discretion of the officials.
- hh. The referee must blow the whistle in on every change of possession.
- ii. The defense may only call for offsides if the play results in a first down.

### 13. Penalties

#### a. Offense

- i. Offsides: 5 yards & replay the down.
- ii. Delay of Game: 5 yards & replay the down.
- iii. Offensive Holding/Illegal Block: 5 yards & loss of down.
- iv. Quarterback crossing the line of scrimmage prior to pass: 5 yards & loss of down.
- v. Forward pass caught behind the line of scrimmage: 5 yards & loss of down.
- vi. Illegal procedure ("trips"): 5 yards & replay the down
- vii. Offensive pass interference: 5 yards & loss of down.
- viii. Flag guarding: 10-yard penalty from spot of infraction & loss of down. 1<sup>st</sup> down yardage prior to penalty results in 1st down. FLAG GUARDING only occurs if the defender DOES NOT pull the flag. If the flag is pulled, IT IS NOT FLAG GUARDING. MOST, IF NOT ALL, FLAG FOOTBALL LEAGUES HAVE THIS FUNDAMENTAL RULE.
- ix. Unsportsmanlike conduct: 15-yard personal foul from end of the play (the down counts). First unsportsmanlike penalty will result in the player sitting out a series. Second offense, the player will be suspended for the rest of the game. NOTE: Loss of down penalties on a PAT attempt nullify the try (whether successful or not).
- x. Impeding the rusher: The offensive player must avoid the rusher beyond the line of scrimmage. Contact or not, getting in the pass rusher's way is impeding the rusher. The penalty is 5 yards and loss of down.

#### b. Defense

- i. Holding ball carrier/Illegal flag pull: 5-yards added to end of run.
- ii. Stripping: 5-yards from the spot of the foul.
- iii. Roughing the passer: 10 yards & automatic 1st down.
- iv. Illegal rush (not 5 yards back): 5 yards & replay the down or result of the play (offense may decline).
- v. Bull rush: 10 yards & replay the down.

- vi. Illegal contact (the ball has not left the QB's hand): 10 yards & replay the down.
  - vii. Pass interference: Automatic 1st down at the spot of the foul.
  - viii. Pass interference in the end zone: 1st & goal at the one-yard line
  - ix. Unsportsmanlike conduct: 15-yard personal foul (automatic 1st down).
  - x. Forceout by defender will result in a spot foul and automatic first down.
- c. General
- i. First personal foul: Player will be suspended for 1 series (offense or defense).  
Second personal foul: Player is ejected from the game
  - ii. Fighting: Player is ejected from the game, potentially suspended, expelled from CFFA.
  - iii. Official clock: The clock will not stop if the losing team commits a penalty.
  - iv. Zero tolerance for any verbal or physical abuse by any player or fan towards any CFFA official (referee, Field Manager, owner, etc). Violation of this rule could result in an automatic ejection for the game and will be subject to further discipline by CFFA coordinator.
  - v. RAIN – We will play in rain unless the field is not playable. This is usually determined by the school district, city, or field manager. The schedule page will be updated to reflect the game status. If you DO NOT get a call or see the games cancelled on the schedule page, then the GAMES ARE ON.

## **ROSTER POLICY**

1. Each team is allowed up to 20 players on their roster.
2. Once a player has been placed on your roster he/she cannot be removed to make room for another player.
3. Players cannot be added to your roster after the 5th game has been played.
4. Players must have played at least one of the first 5 games to be accepted on your roster. Exceptions will be made to this rule for players who started the season injured or serving in the military. This exception can only be taken if it has been applied for in writing prior to the 5th game.

## **FIELD REGULATIONS**

1. No sunflower seeds, food, or drinks are allowed.
2. Water and sports beverages are the only liquids allowed.
3. Alcohol is prohibited at locations, including the parking lots.
4. No gum, cigars, cigarettes, e-cigs, vaping, or other forms of tobacco.
5. Violators will be banned from future attendance.

6. There will be a zero tolerance for those who violate any of the above rules.
7. Team captains AND players are responsible for the conduct of their fans and guests.
8. Failure to adequately supervise fans/guests will result in suspension and/or forfeiture of games.
9. All decisions by CFFA in regard to the above are final and binding

### **PLAYERS RIGHTS AND LIMITATIONS:**

#### Eligibility in League:

Captain must be Catholic and registered to a Parish.

#### Age:

18-39 years of age and the league is co-ed.

(Form of identification must be provided with visible date of birth and picture to identify participant.)

#### Blood:

If a player is bleeding he must be escorted off the court and not allowed to play until bleeding is controlled. The referee makes the judgment if the player is able to continue to play.

#### Injuries:

The referee is allowed to stop play at any time to remove an injured player. If you are injured and choose to continue to play all rules still apply to you. If the game is stopped the injured player must leave the court.

#### Conduct:

Players must remain calm and orderly when not agreeing with the decision made by referees. Outbursts, purposely yelling or forms of misconduct will be rewarded with a personal foul. Disrespect to anyone will not be tolerated. If misconduct continues he/she will be removed from the premises.

#### Alcohol:

**No person or player** that brings alcohol or appears intoxicated will be allowed in the event.

#### Misconduct:

If any player or fan is involved in misconduct before/during/or after the event he/she will be suspended or ejected from the event. This includes the use of the Facebook/Instagram page online. Depending on the severity of the action the coordinator(s) can suspend he/she from multiple games or indefinitely from the season. Misconduct includes: fighting, cursing, taunting of ANY KIND, spitting, racial slurs, purposely yelling or screaming, etc....

#### Attire:

A team must have jerseys/shirt, shorts, and closed-toe shoes. They all must be matching colors and be numbered. No duplicate numbers allowed. Failure to have this will result in not participating that day. The taping of numbers or writing of numbers with sharpie/pen will not be allowed at any time.

#### Jewelry/Eyewear:

Before entering the game a player must be checked in and be already in uniform. Goggles or specialized glasses are allowed but must be notified when captain submits team roster. All jewelry and headwear must be removed to be allowed to play. Pants, jeans, sweats, dress shoes and boots are not allowed.

#### Appeals:

An email must be submitted to identify a problem, party's involved, the reason for appeal and evidence. The OCCSL Coordinator will review the appeal. An investigation will take place and a ruling will be made in a timely manner. The email must be submitted in the format stated above to be accepted as an appeal or it will be discarded. Appeals must be submitted within 24 hours from the end of the game that appeal is being requested for.

### **CAPTAIN RIGHTS, LIMITATIONS, AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

#### Conducts:

The captain is responsible for the conduct of his/her fans, his/her teammates, and their own conduct. If the captain, member of the squad, or fan is unable to control himself/herself, they will be asked to leave. If they do not comply, the game will be forfeited.

#### Communication:

As captain, you are the voice of the team and can ask referees for more information in a respectful manner. They can answer your questions **at a particular time**, such as before a game, halftime, between timeouts, or after the game has concluded. They reserve the right to only speak to the captain. The coordinator will talk directly to the captain on decisions, changes, and any information that **must be relayed to your team**.

#### Appeals:

Appeals submitted from your team will be notified to the captain on progress and verdict.

*\*\*CFFA Rule Book is subject to change at the discretion of the OCCSL Coordinator or Director of Youth & Young Adult Ministry. If changes do occur all captains will be notified immediately.*