

Saint Joseph Sports Adult Alliance Flag Football (7v7) Rules

Administration:

Saint Joseph Sports Alliance Flag Football will follow National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association Flag and Touch Football Rules with some alterations. The following is a listing of the more common rules applying to Intramural play along with Intramural Recreational Sports Modifications. The complete NIRSA rulebook is available for viewing in the Intramural Recreational Sports Office.

COVID19 Disclaimer: Sports Alliance will provide hand sanitizer for everyone to use as needed and we will be doing extra cleaning to make sure our facilities are as safe and clean as possible. We do ask they everyone practice good hygiene and please stay home if you are feeling sick.

Objective and Goals:

The Saint Joseph Sports Alliance's, Adult Flag Football program is designed to give all participants, through participation in competitive games, the opportunity to learn and improve the fundamentals of the game of basketball as well as increase and improve socialization among players.

Managers:

The manager is the primary link between their team and league management. It is the manager's duty to obtain all information regarding league play. Responsibilities include but are not limited to:

1. Reading rules and policies prior to starting league play and informing the players of the rules.
2. Obtaining league information pertaining to registration deadlines, make-up schedules, league tournaments, league awards and tournament berths.
3. Submitting league paperwork on time (registration forms, roster, etc.).
4. Informing league office of changes in his/her address and/or telephone number.
5. Having all players read and sign the team roster before playing and ascertain the eligibility of each player signing the roster.
6. Instructing their players to create an account with Saint Joseph Sports Alliance at stjsportsalliance.com. This is an important tool for SJSA to have information on players for notifications and proper sizing of jerseys.

7. Maintaining control over his/her players in all circumstances including disputes on the field. Umpires/Referees will discuss disputes on the field with manager only. **Players are not to question a call or ruling.**

SECTION 1:

GENERAL RULES & REGULATIONS TEAM REQUIREMENTS

Injury Reporting: Injuries must be reported no later than 24 hours after league week has ended (ex. 6pm Monday if league week ends 6 pm Sunday). If team fails to report injury it will be treated as an unreported injury and injury replacement will not be honored which could result in forfeit of game. Injury replacements will only be allowed if a team goes under the minimum required number of players to play a game (6 players for 6v6 flag football). It is important to fill roster with enough players before the season begins to prevent injury replacements from being needed. **There is no gray area to this rule, and it will be strictly enforced.**

1. A team shall consist of seven (7) players. A team can play with a minimum of six (6) players. The game can continue with less than six (6) players if the official determines they have a chance to win.
2. All players must have checked in with the scorekeeper and be recorded on the game sheet before they are allowed to participate.
3. Substitutions are allowed between plays and during time-outs.
4. The designated player area is one yard off the sideline and between the 20 yard lines. Spectators must remain behind the designated markers.
5. All games shall be played on the date and hour scheduled. GAME TIME IS FORFEIT TIME.

EQUIPMENT & FACILITIES

1. All players must wear close-toed shoes.
2. Each player must wear pants or shorts without any belt(s), belt loop(s), pockets(s) or exposed drawstrings. A player may not turn his/her shorts inside-out or tape his/her pockets in order to play.
3. All jewelry must be removed before participating. This includes, but is not limited to, rings, necklaces, earrings, and bracelets. **a. Penalty: Unsportsmanlike Conduct, 10 yards**
4. Exposed towels may not be worn; a towel may be kept behind the play.
5. Equipment such as helmets, billed hats, bandanna's, pads or braces worn above the waist, leg and knee braces made of hard, unyielding substances, or casts is strictly prohibited. Knee braces made of hard, unyielding substances covered on both sides with all edges overlapped and any other hard substances covered with at least 2 inches of slow recovery rubber or similar material will be allowed.

6. Each player must wear a one piece belt, without any knots, at the waistline with three flags permanently attached. Teams must use flags and game jerseys provided by Saint Joseph Sports Alliance.
7. Each team's players shall wear a jersey of the same color with a legible, identifying number on either front or back of the jersey. Numbers on a team cannot be duplicated. Jewelry is prohibited. Jerseys must be tucked in the player's pants or cut off a minimum of 4 inches above the top of the flag belt. **Any player who fails to wear provided jersey will be deemed ineligible.**
8. Teams may use a legal ball of their choice when in possession.
9. The offensive team is responsible for the ball on/after all plays. A towel may be placed under the ball, regardless of weather or field conditions.

GAME RULES

1. Length of the field shall be 80 yards in length by 30 yards in width with 10 yard end zones
2. The ball will be placed on the 10 yard line after PAT, safety, or touchback.
3. A team shall have four consecutive downs to advance to the next zone line-to-gain pending penalty enforcement.
4. The zone line-to-gain in any series shall be the zone in advance of the ball, unless distance has been lost due to penalty or failure to gain.
5. A new series of downs will be awarded when a team's end result moves the ball into the next zone.

SECTION 2:

PRE-SNAP SET-UP, FORMATIONS, AND PENALTIES START OF GAME & TIMING

1. Toss of the Coin - Before the start of the game, the referee will conduct a captain's meeting during which Team A will call the toss of the coin. The captain winning the toss shall have choice of: a. Choosing offense or defense. b. Choosing which goal to defend. c. Choosing to defer selection to the second half. d. The captain not having the first choice of options for a half shall exercise the remaining option(s).
2. The team on offense at the beginning of each half will begin at the 10 yard line with the 20 yard line to gain.
3. Games will consist of two 18 minute halves with a 5 minute half-time. The clock will stop only for team and officials' timeouts during the first half. Timing will be continuous for the first 16 minutes of the second half. Federation timing will be used for the last two (2) minutes of the second half. At either 2 minutes or the nearest dead ball whistle thereafter, the official shall stop the clock and notify teams of the time remaining (2 minute warning). The clock will restart on the snap.
4. If a team is leading by 19 points or more in the final two minutes of the game, the mercy rule will be put into effect and the game will be over.

5. During the final two minutes of the 2nd half the clock will stop for:
 - a. Incomplete legal or illegal forward pass - starts on the snap.
 - b. Out of bounds - starts on the snap.
 - c. Safety - starts on the snap.
 - d. Team time-out - starts on the snap.
 - e. Official's time out - starts at official's discretion.
 - f. First downs - dependent on the previous play.
 - g. Touchdowns - starts on the snap (after the try).
 - h. Penalties - dependent on the previous play (exception: delay of game c starts on the snap).
 - i. Touchback - starts on the snap.
 - j. Inadvertent whistle - starts on the ready.
 - k. Change of possession - starts on the snap.
6. Two (2) time-outs per half are allowed per team. All timeouts will be 60 seconds.
7. The ball must be put into play no more than 25 seconds after the official has placed the line marker and given the ready for play signal. The play clock will be kept by the official.

PUTTING THE BALL IN PLAY

1. The ball will be put in play using the following procedure:
 - a. Start of the first or second half at the 10 yard line.
 - b. After a touchdown -- 10 yard line.
 - c. After a safety or touchback -- 10 yard line.
 - d. Overtime - 20 yard line.

POSITION & ACTION DURING THE SNAP

1. The center, after assuming the position for the snap and adjusting the ball, may neither move nor change the position of the ball in a manner simulating the beginning of a play. The ball must be snapped in one continuous motion, not necessarily between the center's legs. The player receiving the snap must be 2 yards off the ball for a scrimmage play and for a punt. The center may not snap a ball to his/herself.
 - a. **Penalty: Illegal procedure, 5 yards.**
2. All offensive players must be momentarily within 15 yards of the ball. It must be clear who the seven (7) offensive players are on each play. The intent of this rule is to eliminate all sleeper or hideout plays.
 - a. **Penalty: Illegal participation, 10 yards.**
3. The offensive team must have 3 players on their line of scrimmage at the time of the snap. Remaining may be on line of scrimmage or in the back field.
 - a. **Penalty: Illegal formation, 5 yards**

MOTION/SHIFT

1. Only one offensive player may be in motion at the time of the snap. This motion must not be toward the opponents goal line(forward).
 - a. **Penalty: Illegal motion, 5 yards**
2. If two or more players go in motion before the snap, then this is considered a shift and all players must come set for one full second prior to the snap.
 - a. **Penalty: Illegal shift, 5 yards**

SNAPPING, HANDING, & PASSING THE BALL

1. ENCROACHMENT:
 - a. After the ready-for-play whistle has been blown, no defensive player may enter into the neutral zone for any reason (e.g. signal plays, shift into defensive position, etc.), touch the ball, or contact opponents/ interfere with them in any way. **a. Penalty: Dead Ball, Encroachment, 5 yards from succeeding spot. If this occurs 2 or more times by the defense during the interval between downs, the penalty will be 10 yards thereafter.**

2. FALSE START: No offensive player shall make a false start. This includes simulating a charge or start of play. The ball does not have to be snapped for this to occur. a. Penalty: Dead Ball, False Start, 5 yards from succeeding spot.

SECTION 3:

PLAY ACTION AND DEAD BALL/ LOOSE BALL SITUATIONS DEAD BALL

1. A live ball becomes dead: a. When it goes out-of-bounds. b. A legal de-flagging occurs by the defense. c. The ball carrier touches the ground with any part of their body other than the hands or feet (ball is part of hand). d. A touchdown, touchback, safety, or successful try is made. e. When the ball strikes the ground following first touching by the kicking team. f. When a player of the kicking team catches a punt which is beyond the neutral zone; when an untouched punt comes to rest on the ground and no player attempts to secure it. g. A forward pass strikes the ground or is caught simultaneously by opposing players i. When a muff of a punt strikes the ground. j. When an official sounds his/her whistle inadvertently during a down. k. When a snapped ball hits the ground, it is dead at the spot of contact.

2. Out-of-bounds: a. A player, whether in possession of the ball or not, is declared out-of-bounds when any part of the person is touching anything, other than another player or game official, who is on or outside the sideline or end line. b. A loose ball is out-of-bounds when it touches anything, including a player or game official, who is out-of-bounds.

3. Advancing Fumbles: Advancing fumbles is allowed except on muffed punt situations. If player fumbles ball (other than muffed punt situations), they may then pick it up and advance, if the defense picks up a fumble, they can advance the fumble and score a touchdown. If defense does not score a touchdown, they will take possession where the play was declared dead. A fumble can be advanced on a PAT and can be returned for 2 points.

DOWN & POSSESSION AFTER PENALTY

1. PENALTY RESULTING IN FIRST DOWN: Any penalty which leaves the ball in possession of a team beyond its zone line-to-gain, or when a penalty stipulates a first down, the down and distance established by that penalty shall be first down with next zone line-to-gain.

2. FOUL BEFORE CHANGE OF TEAM POSSESSION: Following a distance penalty between goal lines which occurs during a down and before any change of team possession during that down, the ball belongs to Team A. The down shall be repeated unless the penalty also involves a loss of a down. Or leaves the ball on or beyond the zone line-to-gain. If the penalty involves a loss of down, the down shall count as one of the four in that series.

3. FOUL AFTER CHANGE OF TEAM POSSESSION: Following a distance penalty for a foul committed after team possession has changed during that down, the ball belongs to the team in possession when the foul occurred. The down and distance established by that penalty shall be first down with zone line-to-gain.

4. PENALTY DECLINED: If a penalty is declined the number of the next down shall be whatever it would have been if that foul had not occurred.

BACKWARD PASS, HANDOFFS & FUMBLES

1. A runner may pass the ball backwards or lose player possession by a fumble anytime.
2. The ball is put into play by the offensive team at the point where the ball first touched the ground.
3. A backward pass or fumble may be caught or intercepted in flight by any player and advanced
4. A backwards pass or fumble into the offensive team's own end-zone will result in a safety. If the ball is fumbled into the opponent's end-zone the result is a touchback (opponent's ball on their 10 yard line).
5. Any player may hand the ball forward or backwards at any time.

SCREEN BLOCKING

1. Blocking, as in regulation tackle football, is prohibited. A screen block shall take place without initiating contact. The screen blocker shall have his/her hands and arms at his/her side or behind his/her back. Any use of the hands, arms, elbows, legs, or body to initiate contact during a screen block is illegal. A blocker may use his/her hand or arm to break a fall or retain his/her balance. A player must be on his/her feet before, during, and after screen blocking. **a. Penalty - Personal foul, 10 yards.**
2. Charge, a runner shall not charge into nor contact an opponent in his/her path nor attempt to run between two opponents unless the space is such to provide reasonable chance for him/her to go through without contact. **a. Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards FLAG BELT REMOVAL 1.** When the flag belt is taken from the runner, the down shall end and the ball is declared dead. A ball carrier is considered deflagged when the clip of the flag belt becomes detached, not where the belt falls to the ground. The succeeding spot will be determined by the position of the ball at the time the player was deflagged. **a. Penalty: Personal foul, 10 yards.**
3. If a flag belt inadvertently falls off, a one hand tag constitutes a capture. **a. Penalty: Personal foul, 10 yards.**
4. In an attempt to remove the flag belt from the ball carrier, defensive players may have contact with an opponent's body and shoulders, but not the face, neck or any part of the head. A defensive player may not hold, push or knock the ball carrier down in an attempt to remove the flag. **a. Penalty: Personal foul, 10 yards.**
5. A defensive player may not remove an offensive player's flag when the offensive player does not have the ball. Similarly, the defensive player may not remove the quarterback's flag after the ball has been thrown. **a. Penalty: Personal foul, 10 yards.**
6. A defensive player may not remove an offensive receiver's belt while the ball is in the air prior to the receiver touching the ball. **a. Penalty: Defensive pass interference, 10 yards and automatic first down.**
7. A player may not fasten his flags to his uniform or belt other than prescribed in the rules. **a. Penalty: Illegally secured flag belt, 10 yards and an automatic disqualification.** The official will check the flags of each person who scores a touchdown or PAT. If a player removes their flag belt prior to one of the officials checking the flag belt, the score will be disallowed.
8. All players on the field must wear flags. Failure to do so will result in a five yard penalty, if noticed prior to the ball being snapped. If noticed after the ball has been snapped, then the player without a flag belt must be touched with one hand between the shoulders and knees. **a. Penalty: Failure to wear required equipment, 5 yards**

9. Runners shall not flag guard by using their hands, arms, or the ball to deny the opportunity for an opponent to remove the flag. These actions include, but are not limited to: a. Placing or swinging the hand or arm over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from deflagging. b. Placing the ball in possession over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from deflagging. c. Lowering the shoulders in such a manner which places the arm over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from deflagging. **Penalty: Flag Guarding, 10 yards.**

LEGAL CATCH

1. For a legal catch the pass receiver: a. Must come down with at least one foot in bounds while maintaining control of the ball. b. A catch by any kneeling or prone inbounds player is a completion or interception. c. A loss of ball simultaneously with returning to the ground is not a catch or interception. d. A simultaneous catch by players on opposing teams shall result in an immediate dead ball with the offense maintaining possession at the spot of the simultaneous catch.

PUNTS

1. Punts must be announced before the ball is ready for play. The kicking team must have 4 players on their line of scrimmage. Punts must be snapped from the center. The punter must be at least one yard off the line of scrimmage upon receiving the snap and must punt the ball immediately. Players from the kicking team may not cross the line of scrimmage before the ball is kicked. **a. Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards.**
2. Defensive players may not enter the neutral zone until the ball is kicked. **a. Penalty: Encroachment, 5 yards.**
3. Defensive players may jump to block the kick.
4. The ball may be run back if it touches the ground before hitting a player.
5. **A fumbled punt is dead where it touches the ground.**
6. Quick kicks and fake punts are illegal. a. Penalty: Unsportsmanlike conduct, 10 yards.
7. No player shall intentionally kick a ball other than as a punt.

SECTION 4:

SCORING PLAYS & CONDUCT SCORING PLAYS & TOUCHBACK

1. It is a touchdown when a loose ball is caught by a player behind the opponent's goal line and when runner advances so that the ball penetrates the vertical plane of the goal line. The body does not have to cross the line. Touchdowns are worth 6 points.
2. **The player scoring the touchdown must raise his/her arms to be de-flagged by the official.**
3. There shall be an opportunity to score 1 point from the 3 yard line, 2 points from the 10 yard line, or 3 points from the 20 yard line by running or passing. If the defense should intercept a pass, they may return it for a 2 point score.
4. Fouls during a try before Team B possession: **a. If a double foul occurs during a down, the down shall be replayed.** When a distance penalty is incurred by Team A during a successful Try,

the down will be repeated, if accepted. However, if a Team A penalty carries a loss of down, the Try has ended and will not be repeated.

5. Safety: 2 points. Occurs when: a. A runner carries the ball from the field of play to or across his/her own goal line. The exception to this is the Momentum Rule: A defensive player running for the ball, his/her original momentum carries them into the end zone, and the ball is declared dead. The defensive team gets the ball at the spot where possession was gained. b. An offensive player commits any foul for which the penalty is accepted and measurement is from a spot in his/her own end zone. c. A player punts, passes, fumbles, snaps, muffs, or bats a loose ball from the field of play to or across his/her goal line and the ball becomes dead there in his/her possession. Does not include when a forward pass becomes incomplete.

6. Touchback: Occurs when: a. K or R downs a punt that touches anything while the ball is on or behind R's goal line or no one attempts to secure the ball. b. The ball is out-of-bounds behind a goal line (except for an incomplete pass); or when the ball becomes dead in possession of a player on, above, or behind, the player's own goal line.

PLAYER CONDUCT

1. No player shall commit the following acts: a. Intentional kick the ball. **i. Penalty: Unsportsmanlike Conduct, 10 yards.** If flagrant the offender shall be disqualified. b. Intentionally kicking at any opposing player. **i. Penalty: Unsportsmanlike Conduct, 10 yards.** If flagrant the offender shall be disqualified. c. Intentionally swinging an arm, hand or fist at any opposing player. **i. Penalty: Unsportsmanlike Conduct, 10 yards.** If flagrant the offender shall be disqualified. d. Disrespectfully addressing an official. **i. Penalty: Unsportsmanlike Conduct, 10 yards.** If flagrant the offender shall be disqualified. e. Using profanity, taunting, insulting or vulgar language or gestures. **i. Penalty: Unsportsmanlike Conduct, 10 yards.** If flagrant the offender shall be disqualified. f. Intentionally contacting a game official physically during the game **i. Penalty: Unsportsmanlike Conduct, 10 yards.** If flagrant the offender shall be disqualified g. **Fighting an opponent i. Penalty: Unsportsmanlike Conduct, 10 yards. Any such instance will be considered flagrant the offender shall be disqualified from the league and could be prosecuted.** h. Punch, strike, strip, steal or attempt to steal the ball from a player in possessions. **i. Penalty: 10 yards, and if flagrant, the offender will be disqualified** i. Contact an opponent who is on the ground. **i. Penalty: 10 yards, and if flagrant, the offender will be disqualified** j. Throw the runner to the ground. **i. Penalty: 10 yards, and if flagrant, the offender will be disqualified** k. Deliberately drive or run into a defensive player. **i. Penalty: 10 yards, and if flagrant, the offender will be disqualified** l. Tackle the runner. **i. Penalty: 10 yards, and if flagrant, the offender will be disqualified** 2. Unsportsmanlike Foul Set-up: a. Personal unsportsmanlike fouls i. After the 2nd unsportsmanlike foul, the player shall be ejected from the game. ii. After the 3rd unsportsmanlike foul, the player shall be disqualified from the league/ tournament. 3. Team unsportsmanlike fouls: a. After the 4th unsportsmanlike foul on a team, the team shall forfeit the game. b. After the 5th unsportsmanlike foul on a team, the team shall be disqualified from the league/tournament. *It is expected that no unfair tactics are to be used. These will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

Saint Joseph Sports Alliance will tolerate no fighting whatsoever and any player engaged in such activities will be disqualified and could be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

SECTION 5:

TIE GAME PROCEDURE

1. Tie score at the end of regulation - the field captains shall be brought together and a coin toss will be conducted. The overtime format will be repeated until a winner is declared. The winner of the toss shall be given the option of either offense or defense. Each team will be given 4 downs from the same 20 yard line to score a touchdown. If the first team scores, then the second team will still have 4 downs to attempt to win or tie the a touchdown, the game will be over, if not the ball will be placed at the 10 yard line to begin the series of four downs. If the defensive team intercepts a pass and returns it for a touchdown the game will be over with the defensive team being the winner. Conversion attempts will be held as in regulation play. Each team is entitled to one time out of 60 seconds per overtime period.

SECTION 6:

SUMMARY OF FOULS & PENALTIES

1. Loss of 5 Yards: a. Required equipment worn illegally. b. Delay of game. c. Illegal snap. d. False start. e. Encroachment. f. Illegal procedures. g. Illegal forward pass (5 yards from point of pass and loss of down). h. Intentional grounding (5 yards from point of pass and loss of down). i. Helping the runner: the runner shall not grasp a teammate or be grasped, pulled or pushed by a teammate. j. Unfair tactics. k. Offensive player not within 15 yards of ball. l. Illegal Shift.

2. Loss of Ten Yards a. Delaying the start of either half. b. Two or more consecutive encroachments during same interval between downs. The initial encroachment is a 5 yard penalty. c. Illegal participation. d. Offensive pass interference. (Loss of down). e. Defensive pass interference. (Automatic 1st down). f. Illegally secured belt on touchdown. (Revoke touchdown and loss of down). g. Unsportsmanlike conduct. h. Spiking the ball or not returning the ball to the official during the dead ball. i. Attempt to steal the ball from the carrier. j. Hurdling. k. Unnecessary contact of any sort. l. Roughing the passer (Automatic 1st down). m. Defensive use of hands. n. Guarding the flag belt (and stiff arming). o. Illegal batting. p. Illegal flag belt removal. q. Personal foul. r. Flagrant Unsportsmanlike conduct. (Disqualification). s. Flagrant personal fouls. (Disqualification). t. Intentionally tampering with flag belt. (Disqualification). Automatic First Down Penalties Loss-of- Down Penalties 1. Defensive Pass Interference 1. Offensive Pass Interference 2. Defensive Illegally Secured Flag Belt 2. Offensive Illegally Secured Flag Belt 3. Roughing the Passer 3. Illegal Forward or Backward Pass 4. Tackling/Tripping

Weather Policy: The official/supervisor has final say on whether a game will be temporarily suspended or postponed due to weather conditions or poor field conditions – once he or she arrives on the field. If lightening is in the immediate area, the game shall be suspended immediately. Everyone should be instructed to take shelter and the official can monitor the situation and determine whether the game should play on. In case of heavy rain, play should be suspended and possibly postponed due to the amount of rain. If field conditions become extremely poor and children are at risk of injury, then play should be postponed. If the playing weather is horrible such as cold, rain, mud, high winds, tornado warnings etc... then play should be postponed. Finally, if the weather is warm and there is a light to moderate rain falling, it is possible to keep playing. Remember, this decision to play or not to play rests with the official/supervisor working the game and his or her call can NOT be disputed. The official/supervisor will always have the safety of the athletes in mind when making their decision.

Weather Line: 816-385-5713 or www.stjsportsalliance.com