



Turf Flag Football

5v5 Rules



Updated August 27, 2025

1. Pre-Game – Equipment, Game Time, Defaults

Spirit of the League: The primary focus of FCSSC is FUN! This league is a positive and encouraging environment that is welcoming to players of all backgrounds and playing abilities, with the goal of getting moving, meeting new people, and having fun while doing it! We look forward to an awesome season of welcoming and inclusive play.

Play that is competitive, overly aggressive, rough and/or unsportsmanlike such as pushing, shoving, elbowing, shouldering, tripping, hacking, slashing, sliding, tackling, ball blasting, chirping, name calling, threats and intimidation, is prohibited and will not be tolerated by FCSSC. FCSSC IS FIRST-AND-FOREMOST-FOR-FUN. ANY ROUGH OR PHYSICAL PLAY WILL RESULT IN IMMEDIATE EXPULSION FROM THE GAME, THE LEAGUE, THE CLUB AND/OR ALL OF THE ABOVE. All players should go out of their way to avoid contact with other players and/or eliminate actions or behaviours that could jeopardize player safety. If accidental contact occurs it is expected that players will apologize for that contact, ensure everyone is alright and stop the game to seek appropriate help as required. This rule supersedes all others!

Game Host: You will have an FCSSC Game Host on site to make sure everyone is having FUN during your game! They are responsible for a number of things like waivers, score reporting, rule clarifications etc. to help things run smoothly every week. FCSSC is a self-officated league, so players are responsible for making calls on the field/court. Your Game Host is NOT a referee, but can act as a mediator if there are any disputes, and has authority in the gym! Please ask your Game Host if you have any questions or concerns during your game!

Equipment/Set-Up: FCSSC will provide all game equipment: an NFL size Football, ten (10) pylons, and a set of ten (10) flag belts (with 2 flags each) for every game. In addition, FCSSC's Game Host will set up the field according to the following dimensions:

- Total field length - 70 paces
- Between the end zones - 50 paces
- End zones - each 10 paces
- Total field width - 35 paces
- A pace is approximately 3 heel-to-toe steps.

FCSSC's Game Host will keep score when possible (ie. Only one game running a time). If the FCSSC Game Host is unable to keep score, we ask that each team select a player to assist in keeping score. Each player should bring both light and dark coloured shirts to each and every game. Please wear shorts/pants with NO pockets. This will reduce finger injuries when trying to grab the flags.

Mixed Gender Requirements: FCSSC is committed to providing inclusive access to for-fun sport for players of all gender identities.

In this mixed gender league, teams are comprised of five (5) players with a minimum of two players of the non majority gender (for example, a team with a majority of men must have 2 players of another gender on the field).

Game Time/Defaults: Please arrive 15 minutes early so that you can start your games on time. Games are 55 minutes in length, with a 2-5 minute break at halftime. Teams may call a one (1) minute time-out per half if needed except in the final 10 minutes of play. A default will occur if any team cannot field a squad by 10 minutes after the official start time. A team can play with a minimum of 4 people, so long as gender requirements are met. Captains may agree to waive rules regarding gender requirements, but this should be decided before the game starts. IF IT IS AGREED THAT THE GAME COUNTS, IT COUNTS!

Alcohol: THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO DRINKING OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES PERMITTED WHILE PLAYING!! ANY OFFENDERS WILL BE ASKED TO LEAVE THE LEAGUE WITHOUT REFUND. No exceptions.

2. In Game – General Rules, Offense, Defense, Making Calls

General Rules

- Flags should be placed on the hips of each player at the outset of each play. The flag must be on top of all clothing and cannot be folded over such that the Velcro attachment is on the inside or hidden.
- To start the game, teams can decide who gets 'first ball' by either a coin toss or playing a game of rock, paper, scissors.
- The offensive team starts from their own 5-yard line, and players line up at the line of scrimmage
- From the time the ball is placed on the line of scrimmage, the offense has 30 "steamboats" to start the next play.
- Running down the clock with an unnecessarily long huddle is not an acceptable strategy.
- If a defending team sacks the Quarterback (or any offensive player with the ball) in the offensive end zone, the ball is turned over at midfield to the defending team.
- 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 5-yard line.
- Teams may call a one (1) minute time-out per half if needed except during the last 10 minutes of play.
- **Ending the Half or Game** - With three minutes to go in the half (game), there are 5 plays left in the half (game).
- **Stopped Games:** A Game Host may stop a game before the full time has expired due to overly aggressive play, persistent unsportsmanlike conduct or a general violation of the rules of the game. This decision is solely at the discretion of the Game Host. If the decision is made to stop the game early, the score may be recorded as a loss for BOTH teams. In addition, both teams will be given an automatic warning (Refer to the FCSSC General Policy for specific details on warnings). One exception to this ruling is if the Game Host has stopped the game because of the inappropriate play of only one team. Under these circumstances, the non-offending team will receive the win, regardless of the score at the time that the game is stopped. This is also at the discretion of the Game Host.

Offense, Quarterback and Receiving

- The offensive team has four (4) downs to cover the entire field. If the offensive team fails to score on the 4th down, the ball is turned over and the new offensive team starts their drive from the position where the last play ended.
- The offensive team decides to punt on the 4th down, the other team will take possession on their own 5-yard line.
- The Quarterback may only run the football past the line of scrimmage when/if any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage at the end of the 5 "steamboats". If a defensive player does not cross the line of scrimmage, the Quarterback may count their own 5 "steamboats" out loud and then cross the line of scrimmage to run the ball. **If the defense does not begin counting "steamboats", the Quarterback may begin counting their own and must count to 10 "steamboats" out loud before they can cross the line of scrimmage. (Clarified Summer 2025).**
- To start an offensive play, the ball must be self-snapped by the Quarterback.
- Spinning - An offensive player CAN turn their bodies from side to side, but cannot spin 360 degrees. This prevents defensive players from injuring their fingers. If a player spins, the ball is dead at the point where the spin occurred.
- Offensive players may not block or otherwise obstruct any defensive players.
- Offensive players cannot protect/cover/hide/block their flag. If the person with the ball blocks the defender's hand from grabbing their flag, the play is dead where the block occurred.
- An offensive player can dive or jump to catch a ball, but once in possession they cannot leave their feet at any time. This includes all forms of jumping and diving. If the ball carrier breaks this rule, the play is dead at the point where the player stood before the infraction.
- If a flag inadvertently falls off the ball carrier, or if a player attempts to grab a flag and there is not one on the hip of the offensive player, the ball carrier can be tackled by a one-hand touch from a defensive player (in lieu of a missing flag).
- First point of contact: A receiver is determined to be "in" or "out" based on their first point of contact with the ground. If a player lands first with one foot in-bounds, and then the other foot touches down out-of-bounds, it IS a legal catch, but the play ends where they touched the out of bounds line. If a player catches the ball, but is straddling or lands straddling the sideline, it is NOT a catch. Only a one-foot landing is needed - as long as that foot touches down in-bounds.
- To score a touchdown, a player must either run the ball into the endzone and have both feet in (not just the ball), OR catch the ball in the endzone (with the first point of contact being in-bounds).
- Lateral passes and 'flea flicker' plays are permitted.

Defense

- The defense must loudly count five (5) "steamboats" before rushing the Quarterback.
- While counting, the defense must line up at or behind the line of scrimmage.
- Steamboats should be counted as follows: "one...steam...boat".
- Once the ball has come in contact with a 2nd offensive player (Quarterback hand-off or throw to receiver), the defending players can cross over the line of scrimmage before the end of the 5 "steamboats" and engage with the offensive players.
- A defender may not step in front of the ball carrier or block a running lane if it has the potential to create an unsafe play. Likewise an offensive player should not run with their head down, in an attempt to run through the defenders. In other words, incidental contact is inevitable, but players should not be run over. Please use your best judgment.

Dead Play

- If a player carrying the ball slips/falls and one knee touches the ground, the play is dead and the defense does not have to remove a flag for the play to stop. Please observe this rule carefully as it helps to promote safer play.
- If the football touches the ground for any reason (kick-offs, fumbles, handoffs, etc) the ball is dead and the play is over. The next play is started at the spot where the ball hit the ground.

Violations & Making Calls

- The offending player should call their own infractions, however any players involved with the infraction can also make a call.
- Players not on the field at the time of any incident cannot make a call at any time.
- Fouls (including picks) that are called by the offence or defence will lead to a re-down (the play starting over from the line of scrimmage). Once a foul is called, the play must stop and the play is started over. If the offence/defence is fouled, they can choose not to call a foul if it is an advantage to do so. Example - A receiver is fouled as they catch the ball and continues to run the ball in for a touchdown.
- All games are self-refereed. Disputes about a possible infraction are to be discussed amongst the people involved in the play. If an agreement cannot be reached, simply redo the down. Please play safely and with good spirit.

3. Post-Game – Departure & Score Reporting

Score Reporting: FCSSC Game Hosts will report the score for each game. Please be sure to inform your GH of the game's score before leaving the facility! Scores and standings can be viewed through your account at www.forestcityssc.ca

Departure: Each week after your game, it is important to leave the field in a timely manner. Teams could be playing after you and will need to get their game started on time. It is also possible that the facility could be closing upon the completion of your game and all staff and FCSSC members will need to depart the facility at that time.

4. Playoff Games

No Ringers: To play on playoff nights players must have played a minimum of 2 regular season games for that team.

Substitutes: A player is only allowed to play for one team in each playoff round. Players cannot sub in for another team during the same round, most particularly in a championship game. Exception: a player may sub for another team in the same league during the same play-off round IF the game is not a championship game (ie, title on the line) and the team needing a sub would default the game without the substitute player (resulting in both teams being unable to play).

Tiebreaker: Playoff games will only be 50 minutes in length to allow for extra time to resolve a tie. If the game is tied at the end of 50 minutes, the game will continue until a winner is determined by the next team to score.

Playoff Matchups: For more information about playoffs (including details about how matchups are determined), please visit our policies page at www.forestcityssc.ca/page/policies