



FLAG FOOTBALL

FIELD MARSHALLS MANUAL

Field Marshall Instructions and Responsibilities

Primary Function:

The primary function of the Field Marshall is to monitor and report on the games to ensure that they happen smoothly and appropriately.

Tasks:

Starting games on time is critical to the overall flow of the day. The schedules have been carefully designed to allow for players to move between fields while having a small break between practice and games.

On Arrival:

1. Meet with an AFS Director.
2. You will be given a Field Marshall vest/jacket.
3. Be at your field 10 minutes before the game/practice begins.
4. Inspect the field and make sure Goal Post covers are on the posts and that spectators are on the outside of the field.
5. At the end of the day, please give back your vest to the AFS Director.

During the Game:

1. Monitor the behavior of the fans/coaches during the game and if unruly behavior occurs, go over to the parent/coach and encourage them to behave appropriately.
2. Politely request that he/she cease whatever unacceptable behavior is occurring. If the behavior continues, notify an AFS Director and we will come deal with the situation.
3. If a player gets hurt, the coaches will stop the play and assess the injury.
4. Monitor the situation to see if the coach determines that the player is OK.
5. If the player remains down for a reasonable period of time, or if the coach gives any indication that additional assistance is needed. Contact an AFS Director immediately and indicate what additional support is needed and the urgency of the support required.
6. For very serious injuries, play will be suspended until the player can be safely removed from the field. Contact AFS Directors immediately.

The most important role of the field marshal is to remain neutral and be a calming influence with parents/coaches. We have a semi-competitive League and parents/coaches will get vocal and we must be pro-active to keep parents/coaches calm and remind them to enjoy the experience.

Coaches Manual

Thank you for volunteering your time with these kids!

Over the weeks of your involvement, you will find this to be a very rewarding and fulfilling endeavor. It is not without its challenges but if you have a great deal of patience and understanding of what we are trying to accomplish here you will have a great time teaching these kids the great sport of football. Here are some things to keep in mind:

Goals of the Program

Not so long ago, kids used to go to the park with their buddies to play pick-up football. While surely there are still some kids who still do that today it's a very rare sight indeed. **The first goal of this program is to give today's kids a chance to run, throw, catch, and just play football in a similar manner.** There will be 'competition' involved in that we will keep score and standings but winning isn't the main goal of this endeavor – just **getting a chance to play** is and that should be first and foremost in your thoughts as a coach as we go along.

The second goal is to introduce some 'physical literacy' to the kids. This means the basic skills of running, catching and throwing.

The third goal of the program is to create future football fans. The CFL and other levels of the game such as University and Junior are constantly fighting a battle for the attention of young people and with the huge media and hype machines generated by the NFL and the NHL it's a constant uphill climb in Canada.

League Set-Up

Since the main focus of the league is to let the kids be active and have fun the set-up of the league is critical in ensuring we have our best chance of achieving this.

Based on registration numbers, players will be divided into four divisions:

- U8 will be players aged 6-7
- U10 will be players aged 8-9
- U12 will be players aged 10-11
- U14 will be players aged 12-13

Each League will attend an Evaluation Day to assess the primary skills of each individual player (running, catching and passing). After the Evaluation Day, players will be divided up evenly to each team based on these primary skills.

There are only going to be 5 players on the field at any given time a maximum of 8-11 players should be considered on the roster for any selected team. Rotating players into the game is easy with smaller numbers but you still need to have enough players on the roster to take care of any absences on a week-to-week basis.

ALWAYS have an even number of teams. No byes or weeks off should be scheduled for any team. If you have to lower the number of players on a team to 6-7 in order to create another team to ensure an even number in a league, then do so.

Pitfalls to Watch Out For

The attention span of these kids is very small. It won't take much to distract them and cause delays in running plays or drills. Some of the directions you will get in the following pages will help you in this area so please take them to heart.

Everyone likes being adored by kids, but you cannot just spend practice time as a glorified "Jungle Gym" for your team to hang off of and run around. **You are NOT a baby-sitter; you are a coach** and the challenge you will have is to get the job done as best you can despite the attention span problem you will face constantly. The more you deal with this early on the better success you will have.

Toughness is not a word that will describe the characteristics of all of your players. It won't take much to get the tears flowing when you're dealing with some young children. An errant pass that bops someone un-expectedly on the head, non-inclusion over a period of time, tripping and falling, etc. all have the potential for opening the floodgates. **Do your best to keep everyone involved and active and spread the ball around as much as possible but know that accidents, fumbles, and bad plays will happen and showing care and concern is your first order of business** if the sniffles start. Guiding them to their parents or the League Coordinator is a good plan if you're dealing with tears. Checking back with them and encouraging them to return is crucial in educating them.

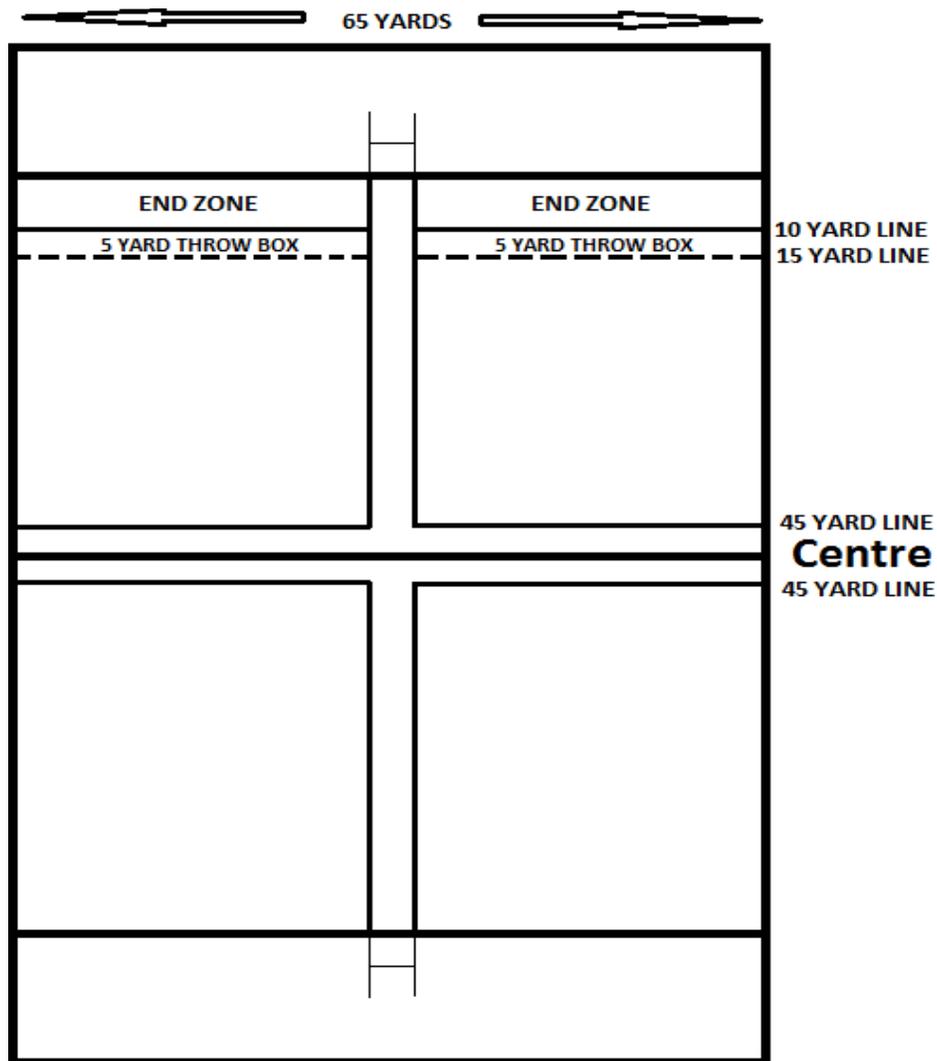
You need to be committed to this. If you don't show up your team will not function. Therefore it is very important that if you know you are going to miss a session for whatever reason you must find a substitute to take your place and inform the League Coordinator of this as well.

As a current or former competitive football player you might find yourself inclined to go for the "win" in a lot of situations. Finding your fastest player and giving him/her the ball constantly is a quick way to ensure success. While that is not "wrong" it is in opposition to the intent of the program. Nobody signed up to watch the fast kid run all the time. **Make sure everyone on offense gets a chance to touch the ball and that you stay true to the minimum number of passes you must attempt each offensive series** (see Rules). Winning and dominating your opponent are proper goals at higher levels – but not here. **Get everyone involved and let the wins and losses take care of themselves.**

Field Set-Up

The flag program can be set up on any standard Canadian Football Field. All you will need is a set of pylons to mark off a smaller playing area. Up to four games can be played on a standard field, two games going in one direction and two games in the other. The set up will be as follows:

- In one quadrant of the field use one of the marked sidelines then go 30 yards onto the field and mark off another sideline with pylons from the 45-yard line in. Do the same in the other three quadrants of the field. The Goal Line will be marked at the 10-yard line and the end Zone will be 10 yards Deep.
- The ball will be scrimmaged from the 45-yard line going in to start each series (see Rules)
- During play the ball will be brought to mid field every time prior to the start of each play.
- The final five yards leading to the end zone will be considered the "THROW BOX" in that the ball must be passed from that point in. EVEN if the offense has some "run" plays left.





FLAG FOOTBALL

RULES OF THE GAME

GENERAL RULES

Number of Players and Minimum Play Rule

Teams are setup for 10 players each but the maximum number of kids a team may have is 11.

- Some resorting of the players as the season progresses may result in some teams having more than 10. In each case the team will have 11 jerseys to hand out.

The game set-up will be 5 players vs. 5 players

- If for whatever reason the team cannot put 5 players on the field the game will be ruled a forfeit in favor of the opponent, however an exhibition competition will still take place between the two teams only with the number of players on the field matching (i.e., 4 vs. 4 or 3 on 3).

The five players on the field during the game that should be rotated after every 2nd or 3rd play with those on the bench.

- All players on the roster must be in the game by the third play and play a minimum of half the plays during the game. This will be done on the honor system initially since there are many factors that may prevent kids from the minimum number of plays up to and including them not wanting to play anymore that is out of the coach's control.

Game Structure

The U8 level is a Coach Passing division.

- A coach from each team will play Quarterback to help distribute the football evenly to all of the players on their team. At the U8 age most younger kids have a difficult time gripping the ball properly to be able to pass. Coaches can pass the ball over hand or underhand to the players and hand off the ball. A Defensive coach may be on the field to put kids in position but must move to the sideline once the play has commenced to avoid interference.

U10, U12 & U14 are Player Passing divisions.

- An Offensive coach may be on the field in the huddle to help call plays but must move back 5-10 yards and out of the way of the plays. A Defensive coach may be on the field to put kids in position but must move to the sideline once the play has commenced to avoid interference. For U14, and possibly U12, try calling all plays / alignments from the sidelines to let the kids dictate the game play more if you would like.

In lieu of timed games, **each team gets 3 Offensive Series or “Possessions” per game in which each team gets 5 Offensive Plays** to score from the 45-yard line. Regardless if they score on the first play, or any play of the five plays they are assigned, they will get all five plays. Only then will the ball be turned over to the other team to start at the 45-yard line.

Practice time will be approximately 55 minutes long followed by a 5-minute break. After the 5-minute break all games will commence. Games will be approximately 30-45 minutes long. Each team will get 3 offensive possessions. After each team has had 3 offensive possessions the game is over. **If tied after 3 series/possessions for each team, game ends in tie.**

Flags and Flag Belts/ Footballs

Players on the field must wear the officially issued flag belt with two regulation flags.

Flag color CANNOT match jersey/t-shirt color.

The flags must hang down from both sides of the waist on the **OUTSIDE** of the jersey.

The flags may not be rolled, tied, pinned, or sewn on the belt.

The official football issued by the event organizers will be the official game ball.

Field Dimensions

The playing field is 30 yards wide by 45 yards long with a 10-yard end zone. The last 5 yards before the end zone is a no running play area called the “Throw Zone”.

Uniform

All players will wear the official game jersey/t-shirt at every game overtop any outerwear.

Only running shoes and rubber cleats (minimum 7 studs) are allowed.

Jerseys/T-shirts must be tucked in or on the inside of the flag belt.

- If a shirt is hanging over the flag belt, the play will be blown dead when the player gains possession of the ball. A Guarding the Flag Penalty will be called on the offense and the result will be a loss of 5 yards from point of infraction. The offense will replay the down.

Mouthguards supplied by AFS, or your own personally supplied mouthguard, are recommended to be worn at all times on the field of play.

Ball Caps with hard brims, are not allowed to be worn during games unless they are turned backwards.

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- It is not recommended that hats of any kind to be worn during games, with the exception of religious headgear. A soft helmet may be worn at your own discretion, but must be approved by AFS staff.

For the safety of all players, no hard or plaster casts are allowed to be worn by any player.

RULES OF PLAY

End of Play

The “Ball is Dead” or Play Ends When:

- The ball carrier’s flag is pulled.
- **The ball is fumbled and/or hits the ground. In that case the ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground AND THE OFFENSE RETAINS POSSESSION.**
- The ball carrier’s knee hits the ground
- Receiver’s flag is pulled.
- **The ball is intercepted. *THE PLAY IS DEAD AND THE BALL RETURNS TO THE 45 YARD LINE. 3 points are awarded to the team that intercepted the ball.**
- Ball carrier steps out of bounds.
- Ball carrier runs backwards past the 50-yard line. In that case the play is blown dead and the ball is spotted back at the 45-yard line.

Offensive Considerations

There are NO kickoffs.

The ball is placed at the 45-yard line of the team determined to go first and then they are given 5 plays and so on as per the Game Structure above.

There are NO punts.

Teams simply get five plays per “possession” and at the completion of that possession the ball is turned over to their opposition at the 45-yard line. NOTE: No play can start from any further back than the 45-yard line. Any loss or penalty application beyond that point will simply put the ball back at the 45.

You may have one offensive coach in the huddle, two if needed at the U8 division.

Once the huddle breaks, coaches must be 5 yards back and may not coach or run with the play.

He/she then serves as the offensive official for the play.

Players must pass or hand off the ball within 5-6 seconds of the snap. If the QB has not handed off or thrown a pass within 5-6 seconds the play will be whistled dead.

The offensive team has 10 seconds to return to the huddle at completion of a play with the coaches in charge of maintaining the flow of the game. Due to the nature of the players no time limit will be placed on getting the ball into play but coaches are encouraged get the play called and their team running a play within 1-2 minutes. Abuse of this arrangement will be dealt with at the league level (i.e., severe delay of game).

In each 5 play "Possession" a team must pass the ball at least twice at the U8 and U10 divisions. At the U12 and U14 divisions teams must attempt a minimum of 3 Forward passes per possession.

Motion

You may use unlimited motion in the backfield but it is highly recommended that this practice be saved for later on in the season.

Pass Eligibility/Receiving

All players are eligible to receive a pass, including the quarterback, if the ball has been handed off, tossed or pitched behind line of scrimmage.

Player must have one foot in bounds when making a catch.

An incomplete pass behind the line of scrimmage constitutes a fumble and the play is dead at the spot of the incomplection.

Rushing the Ball

Direct hand-offs, a toss or a pitch behind the line of scrimmage are legal.

Anyone behind the line of scrimmage can receive a hand-off, toss or pitch.

The player who takes the hand-off, toss or pitch can throw the ball, as long as he/she does not pass the line of scrimmage.

Spinning is allowed to avoid a defensive player.

Charging/Stiff Arming

Charging by any player is not allowed. Charging is defined as running into another player to avoid being tackled; to make a tackle; or in an effort to block a defender from the ball carrier.

Stiff Arming by any player is not allowed. Stiff Arming is defined as an offensive player in football where they extend their arm and try to hold off or push away defensive players attempting to tackle them.

Offensive Blocking

NO BLOCKING IS ALLOWED. PLAYERS MUST NOT IMPEDE THE PROGRESS OF DEFENDERS TO THE BALL CARRIER. BLOCKING WILL RESULT IN A PENALTY AND THE BALL WILL BE PLACED AT THE INFRACTION.

Offensive Limitations

No single player can receive a hand off more than ONCE per series/possession.

If the ball is placed down inside the five-yard line ***THROW ZONE*** from the goal line, the ball must be passed downfield during the remaining plays.

Defensive Considerations

One defensive coach may be on the field to line up the defense, two if needed at the U8 division, but then must move off to the sideline before play commences.

Once the huddle breaks, the coach will serve as the defensive official.

All defensive players must be at least 5 yards off of the line of scrimmage. The U12 and U14 divisions may have a "Rusher(s)" who are lined up 7 yards off the line of scrimmage (marked off by a bean bag) They can rush forward over the line of scrimmage to try and flag the Quarterback during the play but only once per offensive series/possession.

Tackling

A tackle is made by removing one flag from the belt of any player advancing, holding, or carrying the ball.

If a ball carriers' flag or flags fall off while he/she is running, the defense has to one-hand touch the ball carrier anywhere before he/she is considered to be down.

Interceptions

Interceptions simply mean the play is dead and the ball is returned to the 45-yard line and returned to the offensive team as long as they have some plays left in their assigned five plays. ***3 POINTS ARE AWARDED FOR INTERCEPTIONS***

Rushing the Quarterback *U12 & U14 ONLY*

Only the “Rusher(s)” who are located 7 yards back from the line of scrimmage are allowed to rush the quarterback across the line of scrimmage after the snap of the ball. This can be as many players as you like but they all must be behind the bean bag placed at 7 yards prior to the snap.

Players not rushing the quarterback may defend the line of scrimmage but cannot cross it until the ball has left the QB’s possession.

Once the ball is handed off all defenders may rush the ball carrier.

The quarterback is allowed to run once per series. The other 4 plays must be hand offs or passes.

If the quarterback makes a move toward the line of scrimmage, all defenders may rush.

The Defense can only rush the Quarterback ONCE per series/possession.

Officiating

The coaches for the teams will also double as the officials with the offensive coaches calling their own offensive penalties and defensive coaches calling their own defensive penalties, as well as spotting the ball where the down ends.

This is to be strictly done on the honor system and only the basic penalties as previously described and other penalties such as procedure, holding, tackling, and **BLATANT** defensive and offensive pass interference will be called.

Any abusive language or taunting is to immediately be called unsportsmanlike behavior. Second offenders during a game will be removed from competition and third time offenders will be possibly banned from the league.

In all penalty situations the coach will decide as to whether to accept or decline.

Accepted defensive penalties will be assessed as charged, and a replay of the down will be awarded

Declined defensive penalties will result in the play standing.

Accepted offensive penalties will be assessed as charged and the down will be played over.

Declined offensive penalties will result in the play standing.

Each Parent/Guardian will receive a contract for their behavior but regardless of that any abusive language from the spectators will immediately result in the stoppage of play until the offending party has either been warned or, in the case of a second offense, been removed from the facility

ALL PENALTIES ARE 5 YARDS FROM THE INFRACTION.

Scoring

All scores will be worth 7 points for a Touchdown or 3 points for an interception. There are no converts, field goals or rouges during the game. **The only way to score is to cross the goal line or get an Interception.**

For regular season games, if tied after 3 series/possessions for each team, game ends in tie.

For End of Season Tournament, if tied after 3 series/possessions for each team, a shoot-out style overtime will occur at the 5-yard line no running “Throw Zone”, alternating 1 play between each team until one team scores (TD or INT) and the other does not. The team that won the R/P/S or coin toss at the start of the game, will chose offense or defense first.

Standings and Playoffs

Teams will be placed in the standings based on their win/loss record.

In the case of ties in teams record, the ties will be broken by (in this order) head-to-head game result, point deferential, points against & points scored. If the result is still a tie at seasons end after all the tie breakers have been exhausted, then a coin flip will determine placement or in the case of a three- or four-way tie then the drawing of straws.

Playoff format will be determined at later date, depending on how many teams are in each division, and will be concluded in one day at our End of Season Tournament and BBQ Day.