

**NY FOOTBALL GIANTS SNOW BOWL
TO BENEFIT SPECIAL OLYMPICS NEW JERSEY (SONJ)
FLAG FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT RULES
2025 v.1.21.2025**

WAIVER

- Every participant must sign game day waivers prior to participation. If you register online, then you will have signed the waiver. If you do a paper registration, then it is the responsibility of the head coach/team captain to provide these signed waivers to the event coordinator.

CONDUCT

- Special Olympics is committed to the highest ideals of sport and expects all athletes to honor sport and Special Olympics. **There will be absolutely zero tolerance for unsportsmanlike (UNS) conduct.**

Sportsmanship.

Practice good sportsmanship.

Do not use bad language.

Do not swear or insult other persons.

Do not make inappropriate or unwanted physical, verbal, or sexual advances on others.

Do not fight with other athletes, officials, coaches, volunteers, or staff.

- **Anyone who engages in UNS conduct will severely impact their team and their chances for resuming play.**
- If a player receives two UNS penalties, they will be ejected for rest of the game and possibly the next game(s) as well.
- A player who attempts to throw a punch, kick, or knees an opponent will be ejected for the rest of the tournament.
- If a player is ejected from the game, they have one minute to completely leave the field. If the player does not comply, the referee can declare a forfeit and the other team will be awarded the victory.
- If a team comes off its sideline onto field or to the other sideline during an altercation, the game could be a forfeit victory being awarded to the other team.
- Cursing at an official/referee will result in immediate ejection from the game. Captains are the only ones allowed to respectfully discuss plays and other questions permitted within reason with Officials/Referees.

TEAM CAPTAINS/REFEREES

- The team captains/referees are responsible for making players aware of rules and regulations prior to participation in any game, or at any time during the game.
- Captains are the only people allowed to respectfully discuss plays or other questions with Referees.
- For safety issues, teams will not be allowed on the field prior to their respective games until about 10 minutes before their scheduled start times. Most teams will have less than 10 minutes before start of their games to warm up.
- Security Guards will restrict all non-players and teams who are not playing from entering the field area.

TEAMS

- Teams consist of 6 players. Rosters may include up to 15 players per team.
- A team must have at least 4 players present to start a game. Can play 4x4, 4x5, 5x5, 5x6.
- Players may only be on one team roster each day.

- **Four Downs per possession.**
- CO-ED teams must always have 3 women on the field for each game.
- CO-ED by 3rd down female must have thrown a forward pass over the LOS or had one attempted pass to them.
- CO-ED – 8 points awarded as follows:
 1. Female catches a thrown pass in the endzone and/or runs after receiving pass into the endzone.
 2. Female is QB and either runs or throws a pass for a touchdown.
 3. Extra Point values remain the same.
 - **NOTE:** Not an 8-point TD if Male catches the ball and laterals to a female to score.
- The CO-ED Division and Women’s Division will be using a smaller approved ball – like a Wilson TDY.
- **Exception: Female intercepts the ball they are awarded 4 points.**

EQUIPMENT

- **Flags are provided by SONJ for this tournament. No other flag belts are allowed.**
- Flags must be worn at the waist with one flag on each side of the player’s hip **“flaring out”**. No article of clothing may cover any part of a player’s belt. **Shirts must be tucked in or pulled under belt** so the entire flag from post to flag is accessible. Referee must see your post (flag attaches to sonic pop).
- Player’s may wear athletic shoes with plastic or rubber cleats. **Metal cleats are prohibited.**

TIME

- Games 30 minutes in length. Clock stops on injuries or at the ref’s discretion.
- No time out per game; 25 second play clocks; 10 second warning by referee with a 5,4,3,2,1 count down by Referee.
- In last one minute of any game, penalties, change of possessions and scores will stop the clock and will start on the ready for play. Ex: Declared Punt - team declaring punt wants to take the full 25 seconds for play clock, stop clock after 25 second run off, and move ball to other team’s 10-yard line and clock will start on the ready for play whistle.
- Playoffs (elimination rounds) there will be two-time outs (TO) per team per game, but all that will be is a 25 second play clock TO, so get back in huddle and get your play off before the play clock expires.

RULES AND REGULATIONS:

- Games begin with coin toss; winner choice of receive ball or defend a goal. If a team is >10 minutes late to report to the field, game is forfeited. If late to report, coin toss is automatically deferred to the on-time team.
- All activities/playing/warming up with balls will cease once the conference for the coin toss is announced.
- Teams will switch sides on each possession. Both teams will go the same way.
- To start the game and after each score (including a safety), the ball will be placed near the midfield area which will be determined once the fields are well defined. Field will only be from the midfield to sideline, approximately 27 yards.
- There are no Kickoffs or Punts. If Offense does not score after 3rd down, the ball will be turned over to the other team and placed back near the midline.
- QB/Passer is not allowed to run at any time.
- There is no rushing the QB, there will be a five (5) count and the play will be over and ball put back at the line of Scrimmage (LOS).

- There will no running plays, only passes over the LOS (no backwards passes (screen passes behind the LOS. QB/Passer does not have to scramble as the defense can only stand on the LOS but cannot rush or blitz at any time. So quick hitches or forward screen plays behind the LOS are illegal, pass must forward and over the LOS.

SCORING

- Based on National Federation of State High School Association rules and 7 v. 7 Rules.
- In Round Robin, all extra points will be attempted even if extra point is not necessary to win the game. For example: if A scores and is winning 13-12, and no time left on clock, extra pt. will be attempted.
- Touchdowns are worth 6 points.
- Extra Pts: 1 pt. from 5-yard line and 2 pts. from 10-yard line. **Ball is dead and Defense can NOT return for points attempted.**
- **Defense does not score points when they stop the offense after 4th down.**
- **If the Defense intercepts a pass (not during extra points) – Defense is awarded 4 points.**
- **The Defense will not be awarded any points during the extra point try.**

FIRST DOWNS/SERIES

- Offense has 4 downs to score unless a penalty gives a team a new set of downs OR repeat the down (RTD) type penalties are enforced.

COUNT

- A medium/slow 5 count (1,2,3,4,5 Dead) called by referee at LOS. After the count, the play is over if the ball has not left the QB/Passer's hands, ball will be placed back at the LOS or if its fourth down, the ball will be turned over.

LINE OF SCRIMMAGE (LOS) /OFFENSIVE LINEMAN

- All players, including the center are eligible receivers.
- One offensive player can be in motion behind the LOS, after all players are set for one second. All other offensive players must remain stationary in position before the ball is snapped. Motion is defined as being in the backfield, parallel to the LOS or going away from LOS (not Arena Football Style). Motion going forward toward LOS is illegal live ball foul.
- All receivers must go forward from the LOS due to new structure/no backwards or behind the LOS motions.

HIKING THE BALL

- Ball must be hiked from the ground. Side-Saddle snaps are allowed and must be snapped to the QB/Passer. No self-snaps are allowed (5 yards. illegal snap). Dropped snaps are dead (See bullet below).
- Snap can be fielded cleanly off the ground, doesn't matter if it bounces "10 times", as long as QB doesn't drop it, traps are good, balls snapped sideways, where QB has to move sideways outside the tackle box area, or ball is snapped over QB's head, play is dead automatically, ball will be placed at spot it first hits the ground or furthest from defenses' goal line (ie: forward fumbles will be spotted where touched).
- **If ball is snapped into the midfield partition area it will be deemed a safety and two points will be awarded to the defense (note since it is a defensive stop and turnover (exception – no other points will be rewarded – it will be two (2) points for the safety only.**

TURNOVERS

- **Interceptions** – a ball that is intercepted by the defense MAY NOT be returned for a score and is dead immediately. **Due to new field format** – defense will receive 4 pts for the interception/turnover.
- **Fumbles** – if a player fumbles ball and it hits the ground, the play is dead and team who possessed ball last will retain possession at point of fumble or where ball hits the ground, whichever is the furthest from their opponent's goal line. **The only fumble recovery is if ball carrier loses ball and opponent recovers it before it hits the ground, **play is then dead if defense recovers it**, this will be deemed a fumble recovery and a turnover to the defense and possession of the ball to the defense at the designated midfield starting point and no points will be awarded for turnover or deemed an interception.**

BLOCKING

- Offensive/Defensive Blocking – BOTH must be open-handed and thrust outward from chest, with open hands, and not “loaded up” from the side. There is no blocking below the waist or above the shoulders. No chop-blocks. Player cannot leave their feet to block. Blocking must be controlled, do not run a player over, blocking or running the ball (UNR) if it looks rough it is a penalty. No Bull rushing by any player (players cannot take a running start at another, barreling over, UNR (auto 1st/ LOD – **10 yards**).

STIFF ARMS & FLAG GUARDING

- Stiff arms are not allowed by Runner. This will be an illegal contact foul and LOD – 10-yd penalty will be assessed and down will count (LOD), as this is considered a “spot foul not end-of-the-run” foul. Flag guarding is a form of Stiff Arming. **Excessive/flagrant contact/acts to neck or face or head will be a 10-yard UNR with auto 1st or loss of down and could lead to an ejection from game, a second such incident by the same player in same game or in another game could result in player being barred from the remainder of the tournament. Such ejections will be reported to head officials which will be noted to next officials covering said player's next game and warning will be conveyed to the captain of the team as well as the offending player. Anyone who engages in such acts/conduct will severely impact their team as well as their chances for resuming play in game and tournament.**

RECEIVER

- Receiver must have 1 foot in bounds to make a reception. Due to small end zones, minimal O/B will be ignored by receivers, but discretion must be used, if a player runs O/B 3 yards and jumps back into the field of play it will be deemed illegal participation.
- No de-flagging a receiver before the ball arrives or busting up a play “with force” other than knocking pass out of receiver's hands or pulling flag, play the ball. **Note: Stripping a “ball carrier/runner is illegal but not a receiver in the act of catching/possessing the ball.**

FORWARD PASS

- There is only one forward pass allowed per play. There are no lateral passes once a ball carrier crosses the LOS, they may not lateral back to someone behind the LOS and have that person throw a forward pass, nor can a ball carrier step over the LOS and then go back behind it and pass. **NFL rule: QB must be fully/completely over the LOS.**

BALL CARRIER

- The “spot” of the ball is always the **torso/hips** of the ball carrier at the time of flag removal or the flag falling to the ground (ball is dead at the spot).

- The defense cannot push a ball carrier out of bounds (OB). The defense cannot use contact to break up a pass play (**UNR-10 yards**). You cannot hold the jersey to pull the flag or tackle a ball carrier. You cannot “stand up” a ball carrier to pull the flag. This is considered holding – 10-yard penalty and repeats the down. However, wearing baggy shorts if momentarily grabbed near the flags does not automatically constitute holding. Suggestion: Wear football pants, tighter shorts, or leggings to avoid this contact.
- If the ball carrier’s flag inadvertently falls off **during** a play, the play is dead at spot of possession or where the flag falls off when they have possession. If any other player starts a play without both flags and subsequently becomes a ball carrier/receiver, the play ends at the spot of possession. **Exception the QB if the QB receives a snap without both flags the play will continue.**
- **Ball carrier is Down by Contact (NFHS rule) if anything besides feet, hands or ball hit the ground, without a flag pull or contact by opponent being required.**

REMOVING THE FLAG

- A player is considered tackled when at least one flag is removed from the ball carrier’s belt.
- No chucking is allowed (no contact by any player). If receiver blocks on a passing play, Offensive Pass Interference, if illegal contact by defense 10 yards and repeat the down.
- Tackling is strictly prohibited (UNR – auto first and 10 yards and warning).
- A defensive player may not pull the receiver’s flag before the ball is caught; the play is dead at the spot of a one hand touch. This will result in a 10-yard penalty tacked onto the end of the run and repeat the down.
- A defensive player may not grab and hold the offensive player to pull the flag. If deemed that hold restricted player and no other defensive player is between him and goal line, Referee may award a TD (discretion).

OVERTIME

- **Round Robin games with a tie:**
 - One play will be made to determine the Winner. Team that called coin toss to start the game gets to call toss for OT.
 - Choices will be Offense or Defend a Goal. Ball is placed at the 5-yard line. If you score you win, if you choose defense and you stop the offense you win.
 - **Winning team is awarded one point added to their score (no extra points for an interception).**
- **In PLAYOFF Rounds:**
 - The Team that called the coin toss to start the game gets to call toss for OT.
 - **Choices will be Offense or Defend a goal. Each team starts from the mid field line where we start each new possession in regular play with four downs.**
 - If one team scores they go for the extra point (1 or 2 points). The next team has the same opportunity to get a score with the extra point.
 - **If both teams score the exact points, they will go again, and loser of toss gets choice in second series (choice for each series will alternate between A and B: choice of offense or defense).**
 - If neither team scores nor no interception occurs in a specific series the team that comes closest to the goal line wins.
 - If they both end in the same place on their series of downs, we will go again. Note: IE: Say if team A does not score and gets to the 5-yard line, team B must get the ball inside the 5-yard line to win. Once Team B scores or gets the ball inside the 5-yard line, the game will be over, B does not need to play out their additional downs.
 - If we play a third series or more, each team must go for two points on the extra point.

- If either team intercepts the game is over. If team B intercepts at the top of the series, the game is over. If A scores first a TD and 1-point successful try, B gets to go, if A intercepts them or stops them, A wins.

PENALTIES

- 5-yard penalties: False Start, encroachment, illegal 2nd blitz - Live ball, substitution, motion, shift, delay of game, illegal snap. Repeat the Down (RTD).
- **Illegal Plays: CO-ED female touch by 3rd down (see Teams) - running ball from the 5-yard line and in (extra points from 5 yards and in. Flags Under Shirt / Belt / Post Must be Visible** – previous spot 5yards RTD.
- 10-yard penalties: Flag Guard/Stiff Arm spot foul and LOD, Illegal contact (Chuck/Hold) , illegal participation, off holding, Block in the Back, DE flagging/early flag removal (from end of run and RTD), Ball stripping and of Hold of Runner (from end of run and RTD possible TD can be awarded) **Note:** if in the judgment of referee, a TD was prevented, the ref can award a TD if there is no other defender in the area between ball carrier and goal line or is the proximity of the GL. Baggy shorts being grabbed doesn't automatically result in holding, use discretion (unless they grab and hold up runner or grab shirt up high away from the runner's Flags).
- 10-yard penalties: Illegal blocks (cut/chop/leaving feet), illegally tied flag belt, unsportsmanlike conduct.
- 10-yard penalties resulting in automatic first down (Auto 1st) or loss of down (LOD):
 - **Personal fouls/UNR** of any kind, i.e., barreling a player over, rough tackle/flag pull, pushing ball carrier out of bounds not going for flag, possible TD can be awarded contacting potential receiver (breaking up pass), fighting of any kind whether there is contact or not (possible ejection from tournament).
 - Roughing the passer (10 yards. tacked onto the end of play or from previous spot if incomplete)
 - Defensive Pass Interference – spot foul, auto 1st/ or if in end zone ball placed at one-yard line auto 1st. Offensive pass interference – previous spot and LOD.
 - Charging/lowering of head and/or shoulders by runner (spot minus 10 yards. and LOD).
 - Flagrant contact to neck, face, or head (End of run auto 1st / or 10 yards and LOD on the offense).
 - **Note: All defensive penalties on a scoring play will be assessed on the extra point. Defensive penalties will carry over on scoring extra points as well as UNR and UNS, too.**
- Conduct/Contact with Officials will not be tolerated (See Conduct).



Start Line for each New Series – FIELD Length will be approximately 27 yards long – From the midfield to sidelines addition area for endzone will be approximately 5-7 yards in depth.

FIELD width will be the same 20 yards wide.

Due to construction, we are only allowed to use one side/one half of the full field.

