

SNOW BOWL TO BENEFIT SPECIAL OLYMPICS NEW JERSEY
FLAG FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT RULES
v.10-15-25

WAIVER

- Every participant **must be 18 years of age to play and 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 signed waivers from all players on the team to the event coordinator by gameday.

CONDUCT

- Special Olympics is committed to the highest ideals of sport and expects all athletes/participants 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, coaches, officials, volunteers, or staff.

- **Anyone who engages in UNS conduct will severely impact his/her team and his/her chances for resuming play.**
- A player receives two UNS penalties, will be ejected for rest of the game and possibly the next game(s) as well.
- Anyone who attempts to throw a punch or kicks an opponent will be ejected for the rest of the Tourney.
- If a player is ejected from the game, they have 1 minute to 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 during an altercation, the game could be a forfeit victory being awarded to the other team.
- Cursing at a ref will result in immediate ejection from the game. Captains are only ones allowed to respectfully discuss plays and other questions permitted within reason w/ 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 reasons, 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 4 on 4, 4 on 5, 5-5, 5-6.
- Players may only be on one team roster each day.
- COED teams must have 3 women on the field for each game.
- COED by 3rd down female must have thrown a forward pass over the LOS or had one attempted pass to them.

- COED - 8 points awarded as follows:

1. Female catches a thrown pass in the end zone and/or runs after receiving the pass into the end-zone.
2. Female is QB and either runs or throws a pass for a touchdown.
3. Female is handed the ball behind the line of scrimmage (LOS) and runs the ball into the end zone.
4. Female intercepts the ball and returns it for a touchdown.
5. 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 Coed Division and Women's Division will be using a smaller approved ball – like a Wilson TDY.

EQUIPMENT

- 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).
- **No personal flags, only SONJ supplied flags can be used.**
- Players may wear athletic shoes with plastic or rubber cleats. **Metal cleats are prohibited.**

TIME

- Games are 30 minutes in length. Two 15-minute running quarters. Clock stops for injuries or at the ref's discretion.
- No Time Outs during Round Robin play.
- 25 second play clock; 10 sec 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 restart on the ready for play. Ex: Declared Punt- team declaring punt wants to take the full 25 secs 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, two 15-minute quarters, team in possession maintains ball only switch sides.
- To start the game and after each score (including a safety), ball is placed at the offensive team's 10-yard line. There are no Kickoffs or Punts. If Offense declares a punt on 4th down, ball will be placed at other team's 10-yard line.
- **QB/Ball Carrier is not allowed to run from the 5-yard line and in on any play started at or inside the 5-yard line.**
 - Example: A one (1) pt. extra pt. or any extra point that is snapped from the 5-yard line and in, there is no running allowed, QB/Passer must scramble, defense can rush or blitz if they have a blitz available on a regular play and can only rush on an extra point. Ball must be a forward pass over the LOS to run into end zone. (Penalty: will be 5 yards RTD

if accepted by defense). So quick hitches or forward screen plays behind the LOS are illegal, pass must be forward and over the LOS.

SCORING

- Based on National Federation of State High School Association rules, unless otherwise specified.
- In Round Robin, all extra points will be attempted even if extra points are not necessary to win the game. For example: if A scores and is winning 13-12, and there is 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 points from 10-yard line. Ball is Live and Defense can return for points attempted. **No blitzing on extra points. QB will not be allowed to run from the 5-yard line and in and must throw a forward pass over the LOS.**

FIRST DOWNS/SERIES

- No 1st downs. Offense has 4 downs unless a penalty gives a new set of downs or RTD type penalties are enforced.

COUNT

- A medium/slow 4 count (1,2,3,4) called by referee at LOS. After count, defense can rush QB (See Blitz).

BLITZ

- Defense gets 1 blitz per set of 4 downs. If Defense comes across LOS before the count or a hand off, then it is counted as their blitz. There's no limit to the number of rushers/blitzers. The status of the blitz will be determined if defense has broken LOS at time the ball is declared dead (usually blitz is counted with a bad or dropped snap). If ball is dropped or snapped over the QB's head, ball is dead at that spot on the ground or furthest away from LOS/goal line. If there is a replay of a down on a blitz play, defense is given their blitz back. Blitzing after the blitz was used, it will be encroachment, live ball foul.

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).

HIKING THE BALL

- Ball must be hiked from the ground. Side -Saddle snaps are allowed and must be snapped to a "back" in the back field. No self-snaps are allowed (5-yard 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 defense's goal line (ie: forward fumbles will be spotted where lost or touches backwards).

TURNOVERS

- Interceptions – a ball that is intercepted by the defense may be returned for a score (including extra points).

- Fumbles – if 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 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 still live, and opponent can advance/return recovery for a score.

BLOCKING

- Off/Def. 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. Players 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 -15 yards)).**

STIFF ARMS and FLAG GUARDING

- Stiff arms are not allowed by Runner. This will be an illegal contact foul, and 10-yard penalty will be assessed and down will count, 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 15-yard UNR w/ auto 1st or LOD and could lead to an ejection from game, a 2nd 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

- Must have 1 foot in bounds to make a reception. A receiver can't step O/B on his own and come back onto the field and touch the ball. The player can return to block or "tackle" the ball carrier. 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" is illegal but not a receiver on a pass.

FORWARD PASS

- There is only one forward pass allowed per play. There are unlimited backward or lateral passes. Once a ball carrier crosses the LOS, he/she 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.

BALL CARRIER

- The "spot" of the ball is always the torso 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 can't push a ball carrier out of bounds (OB). The defense can't use contact to break up a pass play (UNR-15 yards). You can't hold the jersey to pull the flag or tackle a ball carrier. You can't "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 doesn't 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. **QB receives a snap without both flags, dead at snap.**
- **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. Hips are the spot of ball.**

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 on receivers by defense on passing plays). 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 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. No blitzing. 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.
- **Playoff Rounds:**
 - Team that called 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 20-yard line. 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 losers of toss gets choice.
 - If neither team scores in a specific series, the team that comes closest to the goal line wins. If they both end in the same place or both turn the ball over, we will go again.
 - If we play a third series or more, each must go for two on the extra point.
 - **Note:** if team A doesn't score and gets to the 5-yard line, team B must get the ball inside the 5-yard line. Once they score or get the ball inside the 5-yard line, the game will be over, B doesn't need to play out their additional downs. If team B intercepts and doesn't return the ball for a TD, on B's possession, they must get the ball inside the 20-yard line (except if we have a penalty) and they win, Team A's gains are nullified with any turnover (if both teams turnover the ball, we will play another series).

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: COED female touch by 3rd down (see Teams)- running ball from the 5-yard line and in (extra points from 5 yards and in.**
- 10-yard penalties: Illegal contact (chuck/hold/flag guard), illegal participation, off holding, DE flagging/early flag removal (from end of run and RTD), ball stripping (spot of strip and RTD), hold of runner (from end of run and RTD), tackle (pull down) of runner (end of run and RTD),
 - **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 Belt).
- 15-yard penalties: illegal blocks, illegally tied flag belt, unsportsmanlike conduct.
 - 15-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, contacting potential receiver (breaking up pass), fighting of any kind whether there is contact or not (possible ejection from tournament).
 - Roughing the passer (15 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 15 yards and LOD).
 - Flagrant contact to neck or face or head (Spot foul automatic 1st/LOD).
 - **Note: All defensive penalties on a scoring play will be assessed on the extra point.**
- Conduct/Contact with Officials will not be tolerated (See Conduct).

DEFINITION OF ROUGHING THE PASSER

- Defined as making avoidable contact while passer is in the "act of throwing a forward pass"; any contact made with passer's throwing hand, arm, shoulders and above including an attempt to block the pass, make a tackle; any physical contact made to the passer including pushing, shoving, lowering of the shoulder/head to knock the passer over while attempting to make the flag pull, whether the ball is touched or not. If defense is blocked into QB then no foul may be called by discretion of the Ref.