

# SDAYF

## FLAG FOOTBALL RULEBOOK

SDAYF is the conference of leaders in youth football and cheer who prioritize the development of kids, both on and off the field, in Southern Arizona.



**Proudly affiliated  
with American Youth  
Football and Cheer**

# Table of Contents

<b><u>Section 1: Players Team Composition</u></b>	<b>4</b>
- Team Roster Requirements	
- Game Participation	
- Roster Eligibility	
- Mandatory Play Rule	
<b><u>Section 2: Practice</u></b>	<b>5</b>
- Practice Start Date	
- Scrimmage Participation	
- Practice Limits	
- Conditioning Period	
<b><u>Section 3: Field Specifications</u></b>	<b>5</b>
- Field Design	
- Goal Posts	
- Field Equipment	
- Sideline Requirements	
<b><u>Section 4: Equipment</u></b>	<b>6</b>
- Game Ball	
- Flags	
- Game Uniform	
- Eye Protection and Mouth Guard Requirements	
- Prohibited Equipment	
<b><u>Section 5: Referees</u></b>	<b>7</b>
- Number of Referees	
- Provision of Referees	
<b><u>Section 6: Gameplay Regulations</u></b>	<b>7</b>
- Team Composition	
- Game Administration	
- Game Time	

- Ball Positions
- Punting
- Downs
- De-Flagging
- Blocking
- Ball Carrier
- Passing and Receiving

**Section 7: Pre-Game and Post-Game Procedures** **9**

- Equipment and Uniform Requirements
- Pre-Game Requirements
- Post-Game Requirements

**Section 8: Scoring System and Penalties** **10**

- Scoring System
- Overtime Procedure
- Penalties

**Section 9: Protests and Appeals** **12**

- Protests
- Ejection Appeals

## **Section 1: Players**

### **1. Team Composition:**

- a. Each game is played between 2 teams, each consisting of 8 players on the field.
- b. Each team roster must have:
  - i. A minimum of 10 players
  - ii. A maximum of 20 players

### **2. Game Participation:**

- a. A team must have at least 9 players present 10 minutes before the scheduled game time to avoid a forfeit, provided the opposing team has at least 7 players.

### **3. Roster Eligibility:**

- a. Only players listed on the official team roster form are eligible to play.
- b. The roster must be completed and verified through a certification process before the first game of the season.

### **4. Mandatory Play Rule:**

- a. Participation Requirements:
  - i. Teams with 8-14 players: Each player must participate in a minimum of 8 plays.
  - ii. Teams with 15-20 players: Each player must participate in a minimum of 6 plays.

### **5. Mandatory Play Form:**

- a. Teams must complete and follow the Mandatory Play Form, which will be verified and signed by a spotter. Failure to comply will result in game forfeiture.

### **6. Spotter's Role:**

- a. The spotter is responsible for:
- b. Verifying team play count sheets
- c. Signing the Mandatory Play Form
- d. Maintaining a professional demeanor on the opposing team's sideline, including refraining from:
  - e. Taunting
  - f. Verbal or physical cheering
  - g. Excessive celebrating
  - h. Coaching players

### **7. Enforcement:**

- a. By the 10-minute mark of the 2nd half, all players must have completed their Mandatory Plays (MPRs).
- b. Players who haven't met MPRs will enter the game until requirements are met.
- c. Suspected cheating or signal relaying by spotters will result in ejection and potential disciplinary action.

## **Section 2: Practices**

### **1. Practice Start Date:**

- a. The Conference sets the flag practice start date. Associations may start practices on the same date as tackle.

### **2. Scrimmage Participation:**

- a. Teams may participate in scrimmages after completing 2 weeks of practice.

### **3. Practice Limits:**

- a. During school:
    - i. 3 days per week
    - ii. 1.5 hours per practice
  - b. Outside school:
    - i. 4 days per week
    - ii. 2 hours per practice
- OR
- iii. 2 days per week
  - iv. 2 hours and 15 minutes per practice (with a 15-minute break)

### **4. Conditioning Period:**

- a. A mandatory 10-hour conditioning period is required before participating in scrimmages or games.

## **Section 3: Field Specifications**

### **1. Field Design:**

- a. The field shall be rectangular with marked lines and zones, conforming to the following design:
- b. 80 yards in length
- c. Divided into:
  - i. 4 zones of 15 yards each
  - ii. 2 end zones of 10 yards each

### **2. Goal Posts:**

- a. Not required, as conversions after touchdowns are made by running or passing only.

### **3. Conversion Line:**

- a. Marked 3 yards from the goal line, equal distance from each sideline.

### **4. Field Equipment:**

- a. Down Marker: Used to indicate the number of the down.
- b. Zone Marker: Used to indicate the distance to go for a first down (placed at the forward zone line).
- c. Corner Flags: Flexible staff with flags or soft pylons (if flags are unavailable) will be placed at the four corners of the end zones and sidelines.

### **5. Sideline Requirements:**

- a. The hosting organization is required to:

- i. Provide a Sideline Separator at least 5 yards from the sideline for spectators.
- ii. Designate a Team Sideline Box at midfield on each sideline, roughly 10 yards by 10 yards, and rope it off to keep parents from accessing the field.

## **Section 4: Equipment**

### **1. Game Ball:**

- a. SDAYF flag teams can use a Pee Wee-size football minimum.

### **2. Flags:**

- a. Each player must wear a belt with two flags, one on each side of their body.
- b. Flags must be:
  - i. 14-20 inches long (from the bottom of the plastic holder)
  - ii. At least 1 3/8 inches wide
  - iii. A contrasting color to the player's uniform
  - iv. Easily visible
- c. Custom belts are allowed, but must meet flag specifications and requirements.
- d. The belt must be worn tightly to prevent flags from being turned around during play.
- e. Flags cannot be secured to the body or waist in any way other than the provided or approved belt.
- f. Velcro attachments for flags are not recommended/allowed.
- g. Pop-Socket style flags are allowed.
- h. Excessive belt material must be taped or tucked away; failure to do so will result in a 5-yard penalty.
- i. Jerseys cannot be worn over flags.

### **3. Game Uniform:**

- a. All team members must wear the same color jersey.
- b. Pants or shorts without pockets or belt loops.
- c. Jerseys must be tucked in at all times.
- d. Sneakers and rubber cleated shoes are allowed.
- e. Socks preferably come up to the calf.
- f. Flag helmets and athletic supporters are optional.

### **4. Eye Protection and Mouth Guard Requirements:**

- a. Eye Glasses: When worn, must be of athletically approved construction with safety glass (non-shattering lenses).
- b. Mouth Guard: Mandatory for all players.
  - i. No keeper strap is necessary.
  - ii. Mouth guards must be colored; clear mouth guards are not permitted.

### **5. Prohibited Equipment:**

- a. The following equipment is not allowed:
  - i. Spiked or street shoes
  - ii. Padding of any kind, including hard surface padding
  - iii. Hard metal or substances
  - iv. Anything that conceals flags
  - v. Slick or sticky substances

- vi. Any equipment that may endanger or confuse players

## **6. Rules Regarding Flags:**

- a. Players with no flags or only one flag can receive the ball, but the play will be whistled dead at the spot of reception or control.
- b. If a player's flag falls off while they have possession of the ball, the ball will be dead at the spot where the flag fell off, unless the ball carrier has cleared all defensive players by more than 20 yards and, in the official's opinion, would not have been caught by a defender (Exception: Break Away Runner).

## **Section 5: Referees**

### **1. Number of Referees:**

- a. Regular Season Games: At least 2 referees
- b. Sanctioned Playoff and Championship Games: 3 referees

### **2. Provision of Referees:**

- a. Each Association will provide.

## **Section 6: Gameplay Regulations**

### **1. Team Composition:**

- a. Each team will field eight players at a time.
- b. The offense must have at least five players on the line of scrimmage.

### **2. Game Administration:**

- a. Team Captains: Each team can have two captains and a coach participate in the coin flip.
- b. Coaches can address referees only on matters of interpretation and to obtain information.

### **3. Coaches on the Field:**

- a. One coach from each team is permitted on the field and can give verbal instructions.
- b. Sideline Movement: One coach, team play counter, and opposing team spotter can move along the sideline within the designated coaches' box.

### **4. Game Time:**

- a. Game Length: Two 25-minute halves, with a 10-minute break between halves.
- b. Timeouts: Two timeouts per half, which can stop the clock.
- c. Running Clock: The game clock will run continuously except for timeouts, injuries, or other stoppages as determined by the referee.
- d. Scheduled Game Times: 8am, 9am, 10am, and 11am if needed.

### **5. Ball Positions:**

- a. At the start of the game, the 2nd half, or after a touchdown, the ball will be placed on the offense's 20-yard line.

- b. Punting: Declared Punt: A punt must be declared to the officials, and the ball will be placed at the opposing team's 20-yard line.

**6. Downs:**

- a. Four Consecutive Downs: Each team has four consecutive downs to advance the ball into the next zone or score a touchdown.

**7. Zone Measurement:**

- a. The forward part of the ball touching any line will determine whether a first down has been achieved.

**8. Ball Placement:**

- a. The referee will place the ball in the center of the field after each down, and the team has 30 seconds to put the ball in play after the ready signal.

**9. De-Flagging:**

- a. No Tackling: There shall be no tackling of the ball carrier or passer.
- b. Flag Removal: A player is down when their flag is removed from their waist.
- c. Defensive Player Restrictions: Defensive players cannot hold or push the ball carrier to remove the flag, touch the passer's arm, or use their hands above a player's shoulders.

**10. Blocking:**

- a. Blocking Requirements: A blocker must be on their feet at all times while blocking.
- b. Prohibited Blocking: Cross-body and roll blocking are not permitted.
- c. Blockers can use open palms to block below the shoulders of defensive players.
- d. Downfield blocking is allowed if it's in the vicinity of the play and the blocker uses extended arms to make contact with the defender.

**11. Ball Carrier:**

- a. Flag Protection: The ball carrier cannot use their hands or arms to protect their flags.
- b. Running into Defensive Players: The ball carrier cannot lower their head or shoulder to run into a defensive player.
- c. Stiff-Arming: Stiff-arming by the ball carrier is illegal.
- d. Hurdling/Leaping: Jumping is allowed, but diving over the line to gain a first down or break the pylon for a score is not permitted. However, hurdling over a downed player is allowed for safety reasons.
- e. Spinning: The ball carrier can spin in the open field but cannot spin within three yards of the line of scrimmage.

**12. Passing and Receiving:**

- a. All players are eligible to receive a pass except the center and guards.
- b. Each play must feature at least 4 committed linemen (including the center, guards, and tackles) positioned within the tackle box.
- c. Forward Pass: A forward pass is a pass thrown from behind the line of scrimmage toward the defensive team's goal line. Only one forward pass is allowed per play.
- d. Catching a Pass: A receiver can catch a ball as long as they come down with one foot in bounds.



### **13. Dead Ball:**

- a. Dead Ball Situations: A ball touching the ground is immediately dead, as well as:
- b. When the ball carrier touches the ground with their body, knee, or elbows.
- c. When the ball carrier's flag has been pulled.
- d. If a receiver or ball carrier has a missing flag, the ball is dead at the spot where the ball is controlled (exception: break-away runner).

### **14. Interception:**

- a. Interception Rules: A defensive player intercepting a pass may advance the ball.

### **15. Lopsided Scores:**

- a. Lopsided Score Rules: When a team leads by 24 or more points, the lopsided rules will be executed.
- b. Lopsided Rules:
  - i. Leading Team Run Plays: Must be run between the tackles or 5 yards on each side of the ball.
  - ii. Restrictions on Leading Team Run Plays: No outside runs, counters, double hand-offs, or trick plays.
  - iii. Leading Team Pass Plays: Can be run, but pass receptions are limited to 5 yards from scrimmage, regardless of where the catch was made.
  - iv. Team Down: Can run any play without restrictions.
  - v. Change of Possession: Team Down will be given the ball at midfield after punts or scores.
  - vi. Positioning after Score or Punt: Leading Team will position on the 5-yard line, and Team Down will start their drive from midfield with all 4 downs to advance the ball.
  - vii. Defensive Alignment: Leading Team will have no more than 4 defensive players on the line of scrimmage pre-snap.
  - viii. Rushing the Quarterback: Leading Team will not be allowed to rush the quarterback outside of the 4 defensive players on the line of scrimmage.
  - ix. Game Termination: If the lead extends to 40 or more points, the game will be called with 10 minutes remaining in the 2nd half.
  - x. Applicability: These rules apply to all games, including tournament, playoff, and city championship games.

### **16. Injured Player:**

- a. A player removed from a game due to injury must miss at least one down (or after a timeout, if taken) and cannot re-enter without clearance from medical personnel.

## **Section 7: Pre-Game and Post-Game Procedures**

### **1. Equipment and Uniform Requirements:**

- a. Flag Belt: Must be worn tightly, with flags attached to the provided belt and not secured to the body or waist.
- b. Jerseys: Cannot be worn over flags.
- c. Flag Rules: Players with no flags or one flag can receive the ball, but the play will be dead at the spot.
- d. Game Uniform: All team members must wear the same color jersey, and pants or shorts without pockets or belt loops.
- e. Footwear: Sneakers and rubber cleated shoes are allowed.
- f. Additional Equipment: Socks, flag helmets, and athletic supporters are optional. Eye glasses must be of athletically approved construction, and mouth guards are mandatory (colored, not clear).

## **2. Pre-Game Requirements:**

- a. A pre-game inspection will be conducted no less than 15 minutes before the scheduled game start time to check players' equipment and uniforms.

## **3. Post-Game Requirements:**

- a. After the game, each team's Spotter must sign the Mandatory Play Forms.

# **Section 8: Scoring System and Penalties**

## **1. Scoring System:**

- a. Touchdown: 6 points
- b. Safety: 2 points
- c. Points after touchdown:
  - i. Passing: 2 points
  - ii. Running: 1 point
- d. Forfeit: 1-0 win for the offended team

## **2. Overtime Procedure:**

- a. After game time has expired, the referee will conduct a coin toss to determine which team has possession first.
- b. Each team will have 4 consecutive downs to score from the 20-yard line and goal.
- c. A team will win the game if they outscore their opponents by points from combined touchdowns, extra points, or returned interceptions to midfield.
- d. Intercepted passes will count as turnovers, and if returned to midfield, will earn 1 point and end the game.
- e. If the score is tied after each team's possession, the series will be repeated once more. After 2 overtimes, the teams will enter an extra point shootout.
- f.

## **3. Penalties:**

- a. Penalty yardage is adjusted based on field size:
- b. 80-yard field: 10-yard and 5-yard penalties

## **4. Penalty Categories:**

- a. Line of Scrimmage – Centering

- i. Offside: 5 yards
- ii. Illegal snap: 5 yards
- iii. Failure to observe 30-second rule: 5 yards
- iv. Illegal motion: 5 yards
- v. Illegal formation: 5 yards

**b. Passing:**

- i. Illegal forward pass: 5-5 yards
- ii. Passer crosses line of scrimmage: 5-5 yards + loss of down
- iii. Intentional grounding: 5-5 yards + loss of down
- iv. Offensive pass interference: 15-10 yards + loss of down
- v. Defensive pass interference: 15-10 yards + automatic first down
- vi. Roughing the passer: 15-10 yards + automatic first down

**c. Delay of Game:**

- i. Continuing to play after ball is dead: 5-5 yards
- ii. Recovering a fumble or falling on the ball: 5-5 yards
- iii. Advancing a fair catch: 5-5 yards
- iv. Unnecessary delay: 5-5 yards
- v. Spectators not 5 yards from sidelines: 5-5 yards

**d. Flag Wearing and De Flagging:**

- i. Tackling: 15-10 yards
- ii. Wearing flags illegally: 5-5 yards
- iii. Ball carrier preventing de-flagging: 15-10 yards
- iv. Holding/pushing/hitting while de-flagging: 15-10 yards
- v. Leaving feet while de-flagging: 15-10 yards
- vi. Wearing one flag: 5-5 yards
- vii. Excessive belt material must be taped or tucked away; failure to do so will result in a 5-yard penalty.

**e. Illegal Hand Off:**

- i. Handing forward beyond scrimmage line: 5-5 yards + loss of down
- ii. Handing/snapping to lineman: 5-5 yards

**f. Illegal Substitutions:**

- i. More than 8 players on field: 5-5 yards
- ii. Substitution during play: 5-5 yards
- iii. Disqualified player re-entering: 15-10 yards

**g. Blocking:**

- i. Leaving feet: 15-10 yards
- ii. Cross-body block: 15-10 yards
- iii. Pushing/knocking down: 15-10 yards
- iv. Holding: 15-10 yards
- v. Defensive block/push out of bounds: 15-10 yards
- vi. Butting/elbowing/knee block: 15-10 yards
- vii. Defensive player using hands illegally: 15-10 yards
- viii. More than 2 blockers: 5-5 yards
- ix. Clipping: 15-10 yards

- x. Interlock block: 15-10 yards
- h. Ball Carrier:**
  - i. Stiff-arming: 15-10 yards
  - ii. Lowering head: 15-10 yards
  - iii. Using head: 15-10 yards
  - iv. Protecting flags: 15-10 yards
  - v. Spinning/hurdling: 5-5 yards
- i. Unnecessary Roughness:**
  - i. Offensive/defensive: 15-10 yards
  - ii. Disqualification for repeat offenders
- j. Unsportsmanlike Conduct:**
  - i. Fighting: 15-10 yards + ejection
  - ii. Pulling flag: 15-10 yards
  - iii. Abusive language: 15-10 yards
  - iv. Interfering with game: 15-10 yards
  - v. Illegal plays: 15-10 yards
  - vi. Leaving field early: 15-10 yards + potential forfeit
  - vii. Failing to control players/fans: (15-10)

## **Section 9: Protests and appeals**

### **1. Protests:**

- a. Protests are limited to rules interpretations and player eligibility, not officials' judgment calls.
- b. Protests are handled locally according to SDAYF Conference procedures.

### **2. Ejection Appeals:**

- a. Email appeals to [sdayfflag@gmail.com](mailto:sdayfflag@gmail.com) within 24 hours.
- b. Two ejections per season result in coach suspension for remainder of season and postseason, with potential further discipline.