



**(Special Needs Athletes & Peers)**

**SNAP** promotes relationships between *Special Needs Athletes* and their *Peers* through competitive, non contact flag football. In SNAP Flag Football there is no blocking, no tackling, no contact, just fun. The SNAP program emphasizes diversity and teamwork. Peers not only mentor, but play along side the Special Needs Athletes as well. This integrated dynamic will help build self-esteem, and encourage the Special Needs Athletes to *believe and succeed*.

## OFFICIAL RULES & REGULATIONS

For 3-on-3 Non-Contact Flag-Football

### LEAGUE REGULATIONS

#### **ROSTER**

1. The league is open to intellectually challenged and special needs athletes 16 years and up.
2. There can be no more than 8 players on an active roster.
3. In the event a team has only 2 roster players present, the team may play with 2 players. No team may play with any less than 2 players.

#### **PEER QUARTERBACK:**

1. A Peer Athlete plays the quarterback position. He/she may only pass, pitch, lateral or hand off the ball. The Peer Athlete may not run past the line of scrimmage. In the event of an interception, the Peer Athlete may not attempt to pull the flag of the defensive player with the ball.

## UNIFORMS and EQUIPMENT

### 1. Uniform Regulations –

- a. All teams must wear at least matching-color t-shirts with screened/sewn matching color/style numbers on the back. They need not be actual football jerseys.
- b. All team must wear their uniforms for each game.
- c. All uniform shirts must be long enough to tuck in fully into the shorts and underbelt or short enough that the shirt hem in no way interferes with or covers the belt area.
- d. All players on the roster will choose their permanent number for a given team for the season and that number should appear on the back and/or front of the player’s uniform when he/she plays for the said team.
- e. Uniforms must be the exact same color for any given team.
- f. A player’s permanent number may not be taped or written on with marker.

### 2. Equipment Regulations.-

- a. Players may wear plastic/rubber cleats, but may not wear metal spikes of any kind.
- b. Players are advised not to wear pants or shorts with pockets. Pockets will be torn.
- c. Shirts/Jerseys must be tucked in at all times.
- d. Flags must be worn outside the uniform around the waist and must not be covered by any equipment or part of the uniform. They must be easily accessible.
- e. Flag-belt must have both flags attached to the belt prior to the start of any play.
- f. Footballs may be youth size leather or “composite”. Plastic, rubber or Nerf balls will be permitted for lower divisions.

## OFFICIAL RULES OF PLAY

### 1. OFFICIAL PLAYING FIELD:

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| A. Length       | 60 yards (40 yard playing field, 10 yard for each end zone) |
| B. Width        | 25 yards  |
| C. First Down   | Mid field marker  |
| D. No Run Zones | 5 yards before mid-field and the end zone                   |

### 2. GAME CLOCK FORMAT

- A. Each game is played in two halves. A running clock format is used.
- B. Games are 30 minutes, played in two 15 minute halves.
- C. The clock does not stop, unless there is an injury. The clock will also stop in the last two minutes of a game if the score is within 9 points. The clock will stop on out-of-bounds, incomplete passes, scores, penalties and change of possessions only in the final two minutes. The clock also does not run during extra points in the last 2 minutes of a “single digit” game.
- D. A two minute warning will be given as a courtesy before the end of the game. The clock won’t stop if the margin is more than 9 points.
- E. Halftime is five minutes.
- F. Each team receives two 30 second time outs per half. Unused timeouts may not be carried over to the second half.
- G. On any change of possession, play may not resume until the officials have set the ball and signaled the field ready for play.

### 3. SCORING

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| A. Touchdowns            | 6 points   |
| B. Safety                | 2 points   |
| C. Point after touchdown | 1 point (from 5 yard line)<br>2 points (from 12 yard line) |
- D. If a point-after-touchdown attempt is intercepted and returned for a score, 2 points will be awarded regardless of whether a 1 or 2 point try was attempted.

E. Point-after-touchdown attempts may be returned by the defense from out of the end zone.

**4. COIN TOSS**

- A. The winner of the coin toss has the choice to take the ball in the first or second half.
- B. The loser of the coin toss will get to choose which goal they would like to defend.

**5. DRIVES**

- A. There are no kick offs or punts.
- B. Referee must spot the ball before the offense may execute a legal snap
- C. All drives begin on the 5-yard line with the exceptions of interceptions.
- D. Interceptions may be run back from anywhere on the field, including end zones. The succeeding drive will begin where the interceptor's flag was pulled, unless the play results in a touchdown.
- E. Drives consist of 4 plays to either make a first down or a touchdown.
- F. If a team crosses mid field for a first down, they will have 4 more plays to score a touchdown.
- G. The ball will be spotted where the flag belt is at the time of the pull, not the ball or the feet.
- H. In order to score, the ball carrier must have both the ball and at least one flag over the goal line prior to flag pull.
- I. In the case of pass-receptions in the end zone, the player must have control of the ball and at least one foot in bounds.
- J. Dead-ball penalties (false start, illegal motion, illegal formation, etc.) assessed against the offense on third down will not result in a loss of possession. All other penalties can result in loss of possession.
- K. No player may possess the ball more than two plays in a row. After a player possesses the ball two times in a row he becomes ineligible until another player possesses the ball.

**6. FORMATIONS/CENTERING THE BALL**

- A. The player snapping the ball may either face the line of scrimmage and snap the ball between his/her legs or snap the ball sideways.
- B. The Center may snap the ball to any player on offense so long as the ball and player remain behind the line of scrimmage and the snap proceeds backwards.
- C. Once the center is set to snap, he/she may not pick up the ball with the intention to deceive. This is a false start.
- D. Should the offense wish to move the ball in order to change their formation prior to the center setting himself to snap the football, they must notify the official before picking up the ball from its original spot.
- E. Center/Snapper must be on the line of scrimmage. All other players may be in the backfield.
- F. Regardless of who receives the snap, offense must have a player either under-center or in the shotgun position at the snap.
- G. There can be no more than one player "in motion" at any one time.

**7. RUNNING**

- A. The Peer quarterback may not advance the ball across the line of scrimmage.
- B. There is no limit to the amount of hand-offs that may be made behind the line of scrimmage.
- C. A legal exchange consists of the QB giving full possession of the ball to another player. The ball must be held in the hands of the exchange-player.
- D. Once the ball crosses the line of scrimmage, no ball exchanges are allowed.
- E. The "No Run Zone" is designated to avoid short-yardage power running. It is located 5 yards from the end zone and 5 yards from mid field. Hand offs are allowed in this zone, but the ball may not be advanced across the line of scrimmage unless as a result of a legal forward pass.

- F. Leaping or jumping in order to avoid having your flag pulled is not allowed. Leaping constitutes both feet leaving the ground and vertical motion. This is a 5 yard foul from the spot of the infraction and a loss of down.
- G. A player cannot leave his feet in order to advance the ball forward. This includes diving forward for first downs and touchdowns.
- H. Once the ball carrier crosses the line of scrimmage, all other offensive players must stop moving otherwise a screening penalty will be called. 5 yards from the spot of the foul and loss of down.

## 8. RECEIVING

- A. All players are eligible to receive passes, **except the Peer Quarterback**.
- B. A player must have one foot in bounds and no feet out of bounds when making the catch.
- C. A receiver/runner must have one foot in bounds, no feet out of bounds, one flag in the end zone and possession in order for a play to be ruled a touchdown.
- D. Players may not intentionally bat, deflect or tip the ball to another player.
- E. When making a diving or falling catch, the receiver must maintain possession throughout the fall for the catch to be complete. The ground cannot aid a receiver in catching a ball.
- F. "Pick" plays are illegal and are defined as deliberate attempts by the offense to interfere with a defensive back's legal attempts to cover an offensive player downfield during play and prior to a reception.
- G. "Bump and Run" coverage is illegal and will result in an illegal contact penalty.
- H. If a player (offensive or defensive) has position to make a play on the ball, the opposing player may not "go through him", initiating contact, in order to get the ball. This is excessive contact and will result in an illegal contact penalty.
- I. Receivers have a right to their pattern, as the defenders have a right to defend them. Therefore, the defender needs to give the receiver room to make one full step off of the line of scrimmage without contact.
- J. Face guarding is illegal and will draw a pass interference penalty. Players must play the ball.

## 9. PASSING

- A. The QB will have 5 second to pass, pitch, hand or lateral the ball. The referee will make the count out loud. The ball must be out of the quarterback's/passer's hand before the whistle sounds. If a pass is not thrown within those 5 seconds, the play is dead and treated as an incomplete pass. This means in the last 2 minutes, if the game margin is less than 10 points, the clock must stop.
- B. Offense is allowed one forward pass per play.
- C. Offense is allowed one lateral (backwards pass, throwback, etc.) per play.
- D. Offense is allowed unlimited hand-offs per play.
- E. The ball may not be used as a flag guard.
- F. Any player is considered past the line of scrimmage when either his feet crosses the line of scrimmage. Any pass attempt from beyond the line of scrimmage will be deemed illegal, blown dead and carry a penalty of 5 yards from the original line of scrimmage and a loss of down.
- G. The Peer quarterback may never run with the ball past the line of scrimmage. Doing so will result in a five yard penalty and a loss of down.
- H. If a defender rushes the QB and pulls his flag before the quarterback releases the ball, the play is a sack.
- I. The quarterback or other ball-carrier may not intentionally ground a ball to avoid a flag pull or 5 second violation. Questionable passes must have a receiver in the general area, in the judgment of the officials. In the event the official deems intentional-grounding to have occurred, a 5-yard penalty will be assessed along with a loss of down. (This is NOT to be confused with "Spiking-the-Ball" in order to stop the clock within the last 2 minutes of a game in which the point differential is less than 10 points. In that event, the intent must be clear on the part of the quarterback to IMMEDIATELY spike the ball after the snap.)

- J. If a quarterback takes a knee in the last 2 minutes of a single digit game, the clock WILL NOT stop. Offense must make a sincere effort to advance the ball forward.

#### **10. RUSHING THE QUARTERBACK**

- A. Any number of players may rush the Quarterback from any position on the field.
- B. The rusher must line up one yard off the line of scrimmage.
- C. A rusher must go for the Quarterbacks flags. The rusher may attempt to block the pass, but it is a penalty to make contact with the Quarterback's body or arm, even if the ball is deflected.
- D. The Quarterback must release the ball before the rusher pulls is flag, otherwise the play is a sack and the ball is spotted where the rusher pulled the QB's flag.
- E. The ball is part of the QB's arm. Contact with the ball while in the Quarterback's possession is illegal contact and will result in a penalty.

#### **11. FUMBLES**

- A. If the ball is fumbled on the snap, or behind the line of scrimmage, only the offense may recover the ball and advance it.
- B. If the defense touched a fumble behind the line of scrimmage, then the play is dead. The ball is spotted at the original line of scrimmage.
- C. Fumbles that occur past the line of scrimmage are blow dead at the spot.

#### **12. DEAD BALLS**

- A. Any fumble past the line of scrimmage is blown dead once the ball hits the ground or in any way slips from the ball carriers hands following a legal possession. The ball is spotted where the possession is lost.
  - 1. Any attempt to strip or remove possession of the ball from any ball carrier will result in an illegal contact penalty.
- B. The play is ruled over when the ball carrier has lost his flag (pulled or falls off).
  - 1. If a receiver catches a ball and he has lost his flag, it goes as a complete pass but he is unable to advance the ball, thus making the ball dead where it is caught.
  - 2. If the opponent pulls the flag before the ball carrier receives the ball, he may advance the ball and the defense must pull the other flag.
  - 3. If the ball carrier has both flags pulled by the opponent prior to receiving the ball, the defense must touch the receiver with both hands to end the play.
  - 4. Flag pulling becomes legal once the ball touches any part of the receiver. Extensive or "rough touching" of the receiver will result in a penalty.
- C. The play is ruled over when the ball carrier's knee touches the ground.
- D. The play is ruled over when the ball carrier steps out of bounds.
- E. The play is ruled over when one or more officials blow his whistle.
- F. The play is ruled over when a ball carrier enters the end zone.
- G. The play is ruled over when a flag is pulled. If in his grasp a player has both clothing and a flag, it is considered a legal flag pull providing the flag gets pulled. Without the flag pull it is considered a holding penalty.
- H. INADVERTENT WHISTLES – In the event that an inadvertent whistle is blow, the team possessing the ball shall have the choice to take the play (ball is spotted where it was when the whistle was blown) or replay the down. If time has expired, one more play will be necessary to end the game half or period.

#### **13. OVERTIME**

- A. Flip of possession. Team that wins the toss may elect to posses or defend first Officials will choose which end of the field will be used.
- B. Overtime games will be using an extra point shootout format. First team will try for an extra point. If they succeed, the second team must make their extra point to stay in the game. If the first team misses, the second team will win if they score. If both teams succeed or both teams fail the shoot out will continue from the one point range for three

cycles. It will then proceed to the 2 point range following the same rules until a winner is decided.

- C. During the first 3 attempts the first team may go for two points. If they succeed the second team must match them. If they fail the second team need only score one point to win.
- D. During the first 3 attempts the second team may also go for 2 points. If they must match one point and miss for 2 they automatically lose. If they must match 1 point and succeed at 2 they win.

#### 14. PENALTIES

##### A. DEFENSIVE PENALTIES

- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| 1. Offsides          | 5 yards from the line of scrimmage.  |
| 2. Pass Interference | (pre reception) 10 yards from LOS & 1 <sup>st</sup> down                             |
| 3. Pass Interference | (post reception) 10 yards from the spot of the foul & 1 <sup>st</sup> down           |
| 4. Illegal Flag Pull | (no reception) 5 yards from LOS & 1 <sup>st</sup> down                               |
| 5. Illegal Flag Pull | (reception) 5 yards from spot & 1 <sup>st</sup> down                                 |
| 6. Illegal Rush      | 5 yards from the line of scrimmage.  |
| 7. Illegal Contact   | (downfield pre possession) 5 yards from LOS & 1 <sup>st</sup> down                   |
| 8. Illegal Contact   | (downfield post possession) 5 yards from the spot of foul and 1 <sup>st</sup> down   |
| 9. Illegal Contact   | (backfield) 5 yards from LOS & 1 <sup>st</sup> down                                  |
| 10. Holding          | (pre possession) 5 yards from LOS & 1 <sup>st</sup> down                             |
| 11. Holding          | (post possession) 5 yards from the spot of foul and 1 <sup>st</sup> down             |
| 12. Face Guarding    | 5 yards from the LOS (or spot of foul if the catch is made) and 1 <sup>st</sup> down |

##### B. OFFENSIVE PENALTIES

- |                       |                                      |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. False Start        | 5 yards from the LOS & replay down   |
| 2. Illegal Motion     | 5 yards from the LOS & replay down   |
| 3. Illegal Formation  | 5 yards from the LOS & replay down   |
| 4. Illegal Pass       | 5 yards from the LOS & loss of down  |
| 5. Pass Interference  | 10 yards from the LOS & loss of down |
| 6. Pick               | 10 yards from the LOS & loss of down |
| 7. Illegal Contact    | 5 yards from the LOS & loss of down  |
| 8. Impedance (rusher) | 5 yards from the LOS & loss of down  |
| 9. Illegal Run        | 5 yards from the LOS & loss of down  |

15. PERSONAL FOULS – Personal fouls are infractions or activities that are considered to be inconsistent with the spirit of the game.

#### 15. EXCESSIVE CONTACT/ROUGH PLAY

- A. 10yards & 1<sup>st</sup> down (def. penalty)/ 10 yards from the LOS & loss of down (off. Penalty)
- B. 2<sup>nd</sup> offense – 3 plays suspension for offending player (if team has no subs, they must play with 2 players for those 3 plays)
- C. If official decides excessive contact was “intent to harm”, player will be ejected from the game.
- D. 3<sup>rd</sup> offense in one game is automatic ejection.
- E. 2 ejections in one season is cause for player to be suspended for the remainder of the season.

#### 16. FLAGRANT FOULS:

- F. Flagrant Pass Interference – If in the judgment of the official, a ball was “catchable” and the receiver was flagrantly held or impeded from

making the catch, the ball will be marked as a spot foul (where it should have been caught) and a 1<sup>st</sup> down will be awarded. If it is in the end zone, the ball will be spotted on the one yard line.

- G. Last Man Rule – Where there is no one between a ball carrier and the goal line, and a defender commits a flagrant foul (hold, push or tackle from behind) to save a touchdown, the officials will invoke the “Last Man Rule”. This ruling automatically awards the offense with a touchdown.

17. **UNSPORTSMANLINE CONDUCT** – Are fouls which in the opinion of the officials, fall outside the normal play-of-the-game boundaries and involve behavior or activities deemed detrimental to the spirit of the game and the general atmosphere of the same. They may consist of the following:

- H. Arguing with the Referee.
- I. Vicious and/or personal “trash talk” directed at ANYONE in the playing area.
- J. Vulgar language. This includes any and all “swear words”, or any socially unacceptable language, whether directed at player, officials or no one in particular.
- K. Physical contact with the referee. Will result in AUTOMATIC ejection with possible suspension depending on severity and circumstances.
- L. Fighting or aggressive physical contact of any kind – This includes any contact or physical gesture intended to provoke a physical response or to cause harm. Throwing a punch in retaliation is not considered self – defense, and is still cause for ejection from the game.
- M. Deliberate off sides for delay of game by the defense in order to force offense into longer first down situation.
- N. Throwing of a player’s flag or otherwise making it difficult for a player to retrieve his flag/equipment after the play is blown dead. Players should either drop the flag, or hand it back to the opponent.
- O. Spiking the ball.

