

West Side Flag Inc.

Seven Guiding Principles of West Side Flag

1. Make It Fun

Our goal is for every participant to have fun.

2. Limit Standing Around

Inactivity leads to horseplay and boredom.

3. Everyone Plays

Unless there is sickness or injury, each player should play about the same amount of time. “Platooning” 2 groups on Offense and Defense is a good idea and an easy way to keep track of equal playing time.

4. Teach Every Position to Every Participant

Make sure all athletes have the opportunity to play all positions, if at all possible. It is not up to us to categorize what position that player will be best suited for before he or she matures mentally and physically.

5. Emphasize The Fundamentals

Without getting too complicated, constant repetition of the basic fundamentals of Football (throwing, catching, stance and start, etc.) will ensure a solid introduction to the sport.

6. Incorporate A Progression Of Skill Development For Every Participant

Strive to teach every athlete in every drill and every play from scrimmage. When athletes feel like they are improving, their interest level will remain high.

7. YELL Encouragement, *Whisper* Constructive Criticism

Keep it positive and do not allow negative comments from anyone on your team or staff. While these athletes are at Flag practice and games, we are their role models.

The Basics

- Games will be played with 6 players on either side of the ball for each team.
- Second team listed is the “home” team and will have first possession.
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three plays to score a touchdown. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on its 5-yard line.
- If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its 5-yard line.
- All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense’s 5-yard line.
- Teams change sides after the first 25 minutes. Possession changes to “visiting” team and the clock does not stop.
- Teams must field a minimum of six players at all times.
- Teams consist of 10-13 players – six on the field, with 3 - 6 substitutes.
- Games are played to 50 minutes running time. The score is not “kept”.
- There are no extra point plays. All players should have equal playing time as close as possible.

West Side Flag Inc.

Running

- The quarterback cannot run with the ball.
- A “No-running zone” is located five yards from each end zone to avoid short-yardage, power-running situations.
- The player who takes the handoff or pitch can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball has been handed off, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a defensive player (no diving).
- The ball is spotted where the ball carrier’s feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.
- “Pitches” or “Laterals” are allowed.

Receiving

- All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off or pitched behind the line of scrimmage).
- As in the NFL, only one player is allowed in motion at a time.
- A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.

Passing

- Shovel passes are allowed, but not inside the 5 yard line.
- The quarterback has a seven-second “pass clock.” If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, play is dead, loss of down. Once the ball is handed off, the seven-second rule no longer is in effect.
- Interceptions can be returned until the interceptor scores or gets his/her flag pulled. The change of possession starts where the flag was pulled if a touchdown was not scored.

Blocking (Screening)

- A Basketball style screen can be used for blocking. Movement toward the defender should be minimal and this type of screen should never knock an opposing player off of their feet.
- No extension of the arms or elbows will be permitted.

Dead Balls

- The ball must be snapped between the legs, or off to one side, to start play.
- Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
- Play is ruled “dead” when:
 - Ball carrier’s flag is pulled
 - Ball carrier steps out of bounds
 - Touchdown or safety is scored
 - Ball carrier’s knee hits the ground
 - Ball carrier’s flag falls out

Note: **There are no recovered fumbles.** The ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground. A fumbled “snap” may be a “do over” within reason and agreed upon by both coaching staffs. A fumbled “pitch” may not be a “do over”.

West Side Flag Inc.

Rushing the QB

All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage.

Once the ball is handed off, the seven-yard rule no longer is in effect, and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage. A special marker, or the referee, will designate seven yards from the line of scrimmage.

Sportsmanship/Penalties

If the field monitor or referee witnesses any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, hard blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player warned. The next obvious unsportsmanlike action by that individual will result in ejection from the game.

Trash talking is illegal. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. (Trash talk is talk that may be offensive to officials, opposing players, teams or spectators.) If trash talking occurs, the referees will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.

“Spiking” the ball in celebration or taunting jesters will not be allowed.

DEFENSE

Offsides

First team offense, “warn and educate” and run the play over. If the penalty persists, five yards and automatic first down

Interference

First team offense, “warn and educate” and run the play over. If the penalty persists, 10 yards and automatic first down.

Illegal contact

(holding, hard blocking, etc.)

First team offense, “warn and educate” and run the play over. If the penalty persists, 10 yards and automatic first down.

Illegal FLAG pull

(before receiver has ball)

First team offense, “warn and educate” and run the play over. If the penalty persists, 10 yards and automatic first down.

Illegal rushing

(starting rush from inside 7-yard marker)

First team offense, “warn and educate” and run the play over. If the penalty persists, 10 yards and automatic first down.

West Side Flag Inc.

OFFENSE

Illegal motion

(more than one person moving, false start, etc.)

First team offense, “warn and educate” and run the play over. If the penalty persists, five yards and loss of down.

Illegal forward pass

(pass thrown beyond line of scrimmage)

First team offense, “warn and educate” and run the play over. If the penalty persists, five yards and loss of down.

Offensive pass interference

(illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender)

First team offense, “warn and educate” and run the play over. If the penalty persists, ten yards and loss of down.

FLAG guarding

First team offense, “warn and educate” and run the play over. If the penalty persists, ten yards and loss of down.

Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage.

Players cannot question judgment calls. Coaches who are officiating please work together.

Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.

Attire: Rubber cleats are allowed, except for metal spikes. Inspections must be made. All players must wear a protective mouthpiece.

Note: There are no kickoffs, and only previously discussed blocking is allowed.