

## SOUTH SAINT PAUL FLAG FOOTBALL

Version 22.8.11 | League Rules

### FORMAT

- Players are placed on teams (rostered) by **South Saint Paul Parks & Recreation's** Staff and/or supporting members.
- The game is played with five (5) players, a minimum of four (4) players must be on the field at all times.
- Teams may ONLY have 3 coaches. These coaches must be identified on the team roster to be an official coach.
  - All coaches, both offensive and defensive, must move to the sidelines prior to the snap of the ball.
  - Coaches are responsible for having a copy of the rulebook and schedule
  - If a coach is found not evenly rotating their players, disciplinary action may be taken.
- The playing field is 50 yards x 25 yard wide (End Zone is 10 yards x 25 yards wide)
- Pee wee size footballs are the official football size for flag.
- 40 Minute game clock as follows:
  - Running Time (Officials may stop the clock at their own discretion)
  - Two 20 Minute Halves
  - Five minutes between halves (Half Time)
  - One (1) 60 second time out per half, per team (Clock stops)
  - 45 Second huddle clock between plays
  - Seven (7) second passing clock (Offense only, details with in the "Possessions" section)
  - No Overtime (Exception for playoffs, please see playoff rules section)
- Coin toss determines first possession and the "Away" team calls the toss. Winner of the toss can elect to receive or defer the first procession and the team who does not receive the ball to start elects what side to defend.
- Possessions begin at the 40 yard line at
  - The start of the game or the second half
  - After a score and an extra point attempt
  - When an interception occurs
  - If a team elects to "Punt" (No actual kicking is involved, the ball is moved by the officials)
- Dead Ball/Play Stops are deemed as follows and all actions should **STOP** IMEDENTLY:
  - Fumbles of any type (Ball is spotted at the point of the fumble)
  - Failed Center to Quarterback exchange (direct or shotgun)
  - Interception (ball is placed at the 40 yard line)
  - A flag inadvertently falls off
  - Ball carrier steps out of bounds
  - Any point the ball touches the ground
  - A score occurs
  - Inadvertent whistle
  - Penalty occurs
- Scoring and Extra points are as follows:
  - A touch down is worth six (6) points.
  - One (1) Extra point is attempted from 3 yards out from the goal line.
  - Two (2) Extra Points are attempted from the 8 yards out from the goal line.
  - Interceptions on extra point attempts results in a loss of down and CANNOT be returned for points
  - NO Field goals, punting, kick offs or kicking of the ball.
- All players should receive equal playing time for both offense and defense in each game they participate in.

### SPORTSMANSHIP

- Trash talking towards coaches, players, officials, league personnel, or spectators is **NOT** allowed.
- Any act of rough housing, including but not limited to, tackling, elbowing cheap shots, intentional contact, or any other unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped, and that player may be ejected.
- A mercy precaution is enacted when at any point there is a 21-point differential, the winning team will forfeit a defensive player. The losing team may add an additional player while on defense until the differential is lower than 21 points.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

- This is a developmental league for both players, coaches, and officials. Please understand that this game is to be fun, safe and a positive learning experience for the players.
- Players should be rotated amongst positions throughout the season in attempt to allow for them to have a chance to play all positions by the completion of the season.
- Each player should play both offense and defense within each scheduled game they are present at.
- At the official's discretion a warning may be given in place of a penalty to a player or coach for any of the stated rules. Coaches and players should not expect to receive more than one warning, if any.
- Any and all penalty's called or warnings given are FINAL and will not be over turned. In the event two separate calls are made the officials will gather and discuss to make a final call collectively. There will be NO coach's influence.
- Only head coaches may approach the referee for clarification of a call or warning that has been issued and may not impact the official's ability to observe the next play. NO arguing is allowed and will NOT be tolerated. Multiple requests or abuse of the need for clarification may result in a "Delay of Game" penalty.
- Forfeits will occur/result with the following guidelines:
  - If a team fails to roster/have available 4 or more players for a game
  - If all members of a coaching staff fail to arrive 10 or more minutes past of a games start time
- The South Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Youth Program has a zero tolerance for the following:
  - Arguing with officials (Coaches, players, parents and spectators included) or between player and/or coaches
  - Anyone physically or verbally abusing any player, coach, official, spectator, or staff member.
  - Any person entering the playing field other than coaches and players during the duration of a game.
  - Flagrant unsportsmanlike conduct or personal fouls (tackling, pass interference, charging, intentional contact, Etc.).
  - Intentionally tampering with equipment.
- Any player, coach or spectator who is "Ejected" will need to leave the field before play continues, if said member does not remove themselves in a timely manner their team may be required to forfeit the game.
- All ejections will be reviewed by South Saint Paul Parks and Recreation and may face additional imposed penalties that are as follows but not limited to Probation, Suspension (Duration will be set) or being Banned from partaking in any or all South Saint Paul Parks & Recreations activities and/or events.

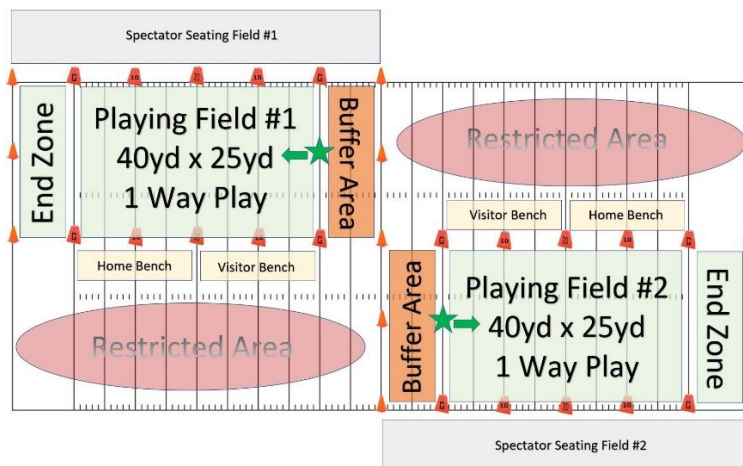
## PLAYER ATTIRE & EQUIPMENT

- The league will provide each team with its jerseys, flags, and football. These footballs are the mandatory game balls used for all teams. No other footballs are permitted during game play.
- Players must wear the official jersey provided by the league for games. If a player arrives at the game without their jersey, they may not be permitted to play.
- Flags and Flag belt must be league approved/supplied, all other belts/flags will be **NOT** be allowed
- Team shorts and flags cannot be the same color, i.e., if your flags are green, you cannot wear green shorts or pants.
- Shorts and pants cannot have open pockets. All open pockets must be taped/zipped shut.
- Jerseys must be tucked in while on offense. A player with a non-tucked jersey that covers the flag belt, who receives a catch or is handed the ball will have the play stopped at the point of where the player is in control of the ball. Repeat infractions will result in a "Flag Guarding" penalty.
- Players are required to wear protective mouthpieces at all times during both games and practices.
- Molded plastic/rubber soled cleats are permitted and tennis shoes may be used if cleats are not available. **NO** metal cleats.
- No jewelry (Include but not limited to watches, earrings, necklaces, rings, etc.) is permitted to be worn during the games.
- Hats with a brim, may be worn backwards only. Hats may not contain strings or items that hang from them.
- No hoodies or jackets/shirts with hoods, hand warmers or towels that attach/hang from the player are allowed.
- All players must start with their mouth pieces in place, jerseys tucked in, flag belts on and flags properly secured at the hips of each player with the flags pointing outward.
- Intentionally tampering with equipment may result in ejection from the playing field with potential suspension for a duration as determined by the league and its governing members.

## OFFENSE DETAILS

- **Possessions and general offensive information**

- There is a 45-second huddle clock, which starts once the line of scrimmage is marked and the ball is spotted.
- Every offensive play requires the center to be on the line of scrimmage for the snap and may not cross it prior to or during the snapping of the ball.
- The ball must be snapped between the center's legs to start a play. Shotgun snaps **are** allowed.
- Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. All motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted towards the line of scrimmage.
- There are **NO** QB sneaks and the quarterback must either throw or directly handoff the ball to another player.
- Spinning while running with the ball, jumping or diving to catch a pass is permitted.
- Diving or jumping to advance the ball is **NOT** allowed, you may hurdle a downed player that is in your running path but may not hurdle a standing player in your path.
- Downfield blocking is illegal and not allowed. Any offensive player who impedes the progress of a defensive player who is attempting to pull an offensive ball carrier will be called for illegal blocking. A warning may be issued on first infraction and/or in place of a penalty.
- Offensive players must attempt to avoid defensive players and may not "Run though" a defensive player.
- Contact to the face, neck and head area of a player is not tolerated in any manner and will be reviewed. The on-field officials will make the call on if the criteria meet the standards of ejection for an unsportsmanlike act/action.
- **NO INTENTIONAL CONTACT** of any kind is permitted, the only contact that should occur in the game is that of pulling flags.
- The ball will be spotted at the point where a flag is separated from the belt of a ball carrier or the point a player steps out of bounds.
- **NO** Flag Guarding, flag guarding is an attempt by the player with possession of the ball and attempts to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the head, hand, arm, or shoulder or covering the flags with a football jersey.
- For each possession the offense has three (3) downs with a fourth down option to obtain a first down at midfield, if midfield is obtained, the offense then has three (3) more downs to reach the end zone. If midfield is not obtained or passed within the four downs the result is a turnover.(Defined further below)
- A first down is only obtained one of two ways; the offense reaches midfield within three (3) downs with a fourth down option or a defensive penalty occurs with the result being an automatic first down.
- If a first down is not obtained by reaching mid-field with in the four downs the ball will be turned over to the team at spot of the failed attempt, if a "Punt" is elected on fourth down the ball is spotted at the 40 yard line.
- If a touchdown is not successful within the three attempts after reaching mid field the ball will be turned over to the opposing team and placed on the 40 yard line.
- NO line of scrimmages will be place behind the 45 yard line and additional penalties that occur once the ball is place at the 45 yard line will result in a loss of down with no further yardage removed. Repeat penalties while the ball is on the 45 yard line will be reviewed as grounds to force a change of possession. This is to prevent "Stalling" or "Clock Killing" situations by an offense/team.
- Field and first down markers are marked on the image below:



- **Passing information**

- QB has a seven (7) second “pass clock.” The quarterback has seven seconds to either pass the ball or hand it off directly to another player, once this action is completed the clock is no longer in effect.
- If a pass or direct handoff does not occur within seven seconds the play is whistled dead and will result in a loss of down and the ball will be placed back to the originating line of scrimmage.
- All passes must be completed from behind the line of scrimmage (no feet, hands or ball may cross and be thrown or handed off forward forward), if a pass or hand off occurs beyond the line of scrimmage the play will be whistled dead and the ball will result in a loss of down as well as a 5 yard loss from the original line of scrimmage.
- Only one (1) forward pass may occur per down and all passes must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
- NO Quarterback sneaks and the quarterback may **NOT** cross the line of scrimmage unless one of the following occurs first:
  - Direct hand off to another player behind the line of scrimmage
  - A forward pass is completed from behind the line of scrimmage
- Intentional grounding is NOT allowed and will result in a whistle, loss of down and a 5 yard penalty.
- Shotgun snaps are allowed
- The Quarterback may not move towards the line of scrimmage and have the ball snapped while in motion.
- A quarterback may be in motion laterally and have the ball snapped providing they are the only one in motion. Two people in motion will result in a dead play, loss of down and 5 yard penalty.

- **Receiver information**

- All players are eligible to receive passes, including the QB only if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage first.
- A player who gains possession of a pass is considered in bounds if a foot or other body part contacts the ground first while in the field of play prior to the ball/player or additional part parts go out of bounds.
- Once a receiver’s flag is removed from their belt the play is over and the ball will be spotted at that point
- If a receiver’s flag inadvertently falls off, even without contact from another player, that player is ruled down at the spot the flag fell off.
- If a receiver’s flag falls from their belt prior to receiving a pass the receiver is ruled down at the point of the catch. Receiver may replace a fallen flag to their belt prior to a catch and be eligible to proceed progress once caught.
- A receiver can’t willingly run out of bounds and then come back in bounds to catch a ball.
- In the event that a receiver and defender both catch the ball at the same time, and both retain possession to the ground, then the tie would go to the receiver, with the receiver being down at the point of the tied reception.
- It is the responsibility of the receiver to avoid colliding with defenders that lie in their path. Unintentional contact will not be penalized, provided the receiver makes an effort to avoid it. Failure to attempt to avoid contact with a defender (charging) may be penalized. Intentional contact will not be tolerated, and may also result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty, and/or player ejection.
- Flag guarding is not allowed.

- **Runner information**

- Only “direct” handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are legal. Anyone behind the line of scrimmage can receive a handoff. A player must completely let go of the ball, to be considered a legal handoff.
- There is no limit to the number of handoffs that can be performed by the offense in a single play.
- The QB can run the ball only if they have first handed the ball off behind the line of scrimmage and then taken a “direct” handoff back from another player before the ball has ever crossed the line of scrimmage.
- The player who takes a handoff can throw the ball, as long as they do not pass the line of scrimmage first.
- It is the responsibility of the ball carrier to avoid colliding with defenders that lie in their path. Unintentional contact will not be penalized, provided the ball carrier makes an effort to avoid it. Failure to attempt to avoid contact with a defender (charging) may be penalized. Intentional contact will not be tolerated, and may also result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty, and/or player ejection.
- Flag guarding is not allowed.

## DEFENSE DETAILS

- **Possessions and general information**
  - Defensive players cannot pass the line of scrimmage, until the ball is handed off.
  - **NO** Rushing or Blitzing is allowed – No forward movement from the defense prior to snap
  - A defensive player must not willingly go out of bounds while in pursuit of an offensive player, nor may they come from out of bounds to make a play/flag pull on the offensive player.
  - Defenders must only attempt to grab an offensive player's flag(s) when trying to make a play/stop.
  - If a defender attempts to pull an offensive player's flags and inadvertently grabs their jersey, the defender must immediately and completely release the jersey before they can attempt to pull a flag. Failure to do so will result in a holding penalty.
  - Once a defender removes an offensive player's flag(s) they should immediately hold the flag above their head at the spot where the capture occurred.
  - The play is ended when either receiver or ball carrier has one of the following occur:
    - Their flag(s) removed
    - The football is fumbled
    - An interception occurs
    - When the player crosses into the end zone.
  - All defensive players must be 3-yard or more from the line of scrimmage prior to the snap of the ball.
  - Bumping, push off, hand checking or jamming is not allowed by any player and all intentional contact will result in a penalty.
  - A defender owns positional right away when attempting to remove an offensive player's flag(s), an offensive player must attempt to avoid a defensive player and may **NOT** run through a defender.
  - Diving to remove a flag **IS** allowed.
  - Punching, stripping or forcing a fumble or removal of the ball from a receiver and/or runner's hand(s)/arm(s) are **NOT** allowed. In the event a ball is forced out the play will be whistled down at that spot and a penalty of 10-yards will be assessed with the yardage being added to the point of the dead ball.

## OVERTIME RULES

- There is no overtime during the regular season and is only reserved for the playoffs when bracket play games are scheduled.
- During a bracketed playoff game if the regulation play clock ends and the score is tied the following will apply:
  - A coin toss will determine who starts with the ball
  - The team to call the coin toss is the opposite team then the one who called it to start the game
  - The winner of the coin toss will elect to receive the ball to start or to defend first
  - Offense will start at the 40 yard line and will use the same rules as outlined in the rule book
  - If the offense fails to score on its series of possession and/or the ball is turned over the team taking over will have an attempt to score by starting at the point as outlined within the rule book (IE: Interceptions and Turnover on downs have their own points in which the ball will be placed to start). If the team who caused the turnover scores a touchdown resulting in a lead, they will be determined the winner. If they don't score and turn it over on downs or have an interception, play will continue and will become sudden death/first to score
  - If a team scores on the first series possession after the coin toss, this team will attempt an extra point (1 or 2 point try). The score will be tallied, and the opposing team will then have a series of possessions to score a touchdown followed by an extra point attempt to either tie or take the lead. If the attempt results in a lead the game is over, a tie the game continues as the opposing team takes possession and play continues this way until a lead is taken (1<sup>st</sup> to score).