



Coach,

Thank you for your interest in joining us for the **Flag Football Divisions** of the 2020 Thanksgiving Bowl National Championship. Below are some quick reference items we will need to make your team's experience at our event more memorable. The following items are explained in this packet: *Eligibility Rules, Game Play Rules and Procedures, and Protest Procedures.*

Quick Fact List:

- All teams must pay registration fee in full and submit completed Rocky Top Sports World team waiver prior to being scheduled for game play.
- Four guaranteed games.
- Divisions are set based on **age**. If a division is larger than 8 teams, there is a chance it could be split into two (2) divisions.
- Pool play on Friday, single elimination with consolation bracket on Saturday.
- Saturday brackets will be set and released upon conclusion of pool play.
- Tie Breakers (if needed) in order of importance: 1. Record 2. Head to Head 3. Points Allowed 4. Point Differential 5. Points Scored
- All players must be present for team check in.

Upon reviewing this information, feel free to contact us with any questions or comments at 865-202-6874 or Andrew@rockytopsportsworld.com

Thank you,

Andrew Capps, Rocky Top Sports World

2020 Thanksgiving Bowl Flag Football Rules

Eligibility Rules

1. Proof of age *must be presented* for all players who are participating in the 2020 Thanksgiving Bowl. Acceptable proof of age is a state ID, certificate of birth (with an official state seal), conference ID cards, National Sports ID form, court documents or another official document that shows the date of birth. Photocopies of birth certificates without official seals, school records or other documents are not acceptable as proof of age. Incorrect, false, or doctored documents can lead to athlete ineligibility, forfeiture of games, banning from future participation in our tournament, and potential liability to others for any injuries that occur due to the use of an ineligible player. The age cut off for each age division is August 1st of current year (i.e. A birthdate of Sept. 2nd, 2011 would be an eligible 8u player).
2. At team check in, each team will turn in a team roster in numerical order (indicating player date of birth) and present their team book to tournament officials. Team books must be in numerical order, for each participating player there must be a player ID/release completed with photo attached, signature of parent/guardian, and notary seal. On the opposite page, or on the back if clear page protectors are used, will be the legal birth document. Hard copies of State IDs do not require a notary seal.
3. **Team check ins will be available starting on Wednesday, November 25, 2020.** If teams cannot check in on Wednesday, they must be checked in a minimum of two (2) hours before their first game. Thursday check in times can be coordinated with Tournament Director.

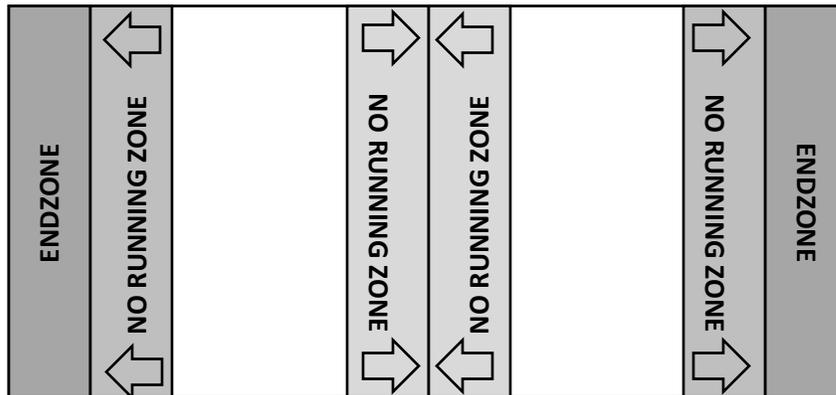
Age Divisions:

6U | Must be 6 or younger on August 1, 2020

8U | Must be 8 or younger on August 1, 2020

Field

1. The field dimensions are 25 yards by 50 yards with two 5-yard end zones, and a midfield line-to-gain. No-run zones precede each line-to gain by 5 yards.



2. No-run zones are in place to prevent teams from conducting power run plays. While in the no-run zones teams cannot run the ball in any fashion. All plays must be pass plays, even with a handoff.
3. Each offensive team approaches only TWO no-run zones in each drive (one zone 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down, and one zone 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD).

Rosters

1. Home teams wear dark color jerseys. Visiting teams wear light color jerseys.
2. Teams must consist of at least five players with a maximum of 10 players.
3. Teams must start games with a minimum of five players. In the event of an injury, a team with insufficient substitute players may play with four players on the field but no fewer than four.
4. Only **two** coaches per team are allowed on the sidelines. All team photographers, managers, position coaches, team moms, fans, etc. must remain a minimum of 10 yards off the field in the end zone area.

Equipment

1. Participants must bring their own belts and mouth guards to the tournament. Extra mouth guards will be available for purchase.
2. All players must always wear belts and mouth guards while on the playing fields.
3. Game footballs will be provided. Team footballs are allowed during warmups.
4. Players must wear shoes or cleats. Games will be on turf fields. If wearing shoes, turf trainers are preferred.
5. Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads and knee pads. Braces with exposed metals are not allowed.
6. Players must remove all jewelry, hats and do-rags. Winter beanies are allowed.
7. Players' jerseys must be tucked into shorts or pants if they hang below the belt line.
8. We recommend players wear shorts or pants that do not have pockets.
 - a. **Flag belts cannot be the same color as shorts or pants.**

Games

1. At the start of each game, captains from both teams meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who starts with the ball. The visiting team calls the toss.
2. The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense. The loser of the coin toss has the choice of direction. Possession changes to start the second half to the team that started the game on defense.
3. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has three (3) plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three (3) plays to score a touchdown.
4. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts its drive on its own 5-yard line.
5. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its own 5-yard line.
6. All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yard line.
7. Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.

Timing and Overtime

1. Games are played on a 20-minute continuous clock with two 10-minute halves unless one team gains a 28-point advantage, which will then end the game. Clock stops only for timeouts or injuries.
2. Halftime is one minute.
3. Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.
4. Each team has one 30-second timeout per half. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
5. In the event of an injury, the clock will stop then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play.
6. If the score is tied at the end of 20 minutes, an overtime period will be used to determine a winner. Overtime format is as follows:
 - a. A coin flip will determine the team that chooses to be on offense or defense first.
 - i. If a second round of overtime must be played, the team that lost the coin toss will get to choose offense or defense for the start of the second round of overtime. This process continues with teams alternating who gets to choose to be on offense or defense to start out during every round of overtime.
 - ii. The referee will determine which end of the field the overtime will take place on.
 - b. Each team will take turns getting one (1) play from the defense's 5-yard line for one point or the defense's 10-yard line for two points. Whether to go for one or two points is up to the offensive team. Whether or not the team that begins on offense converts the team that started on defense gets a chance on offense to win or tie by converting a one- or two-point play of their own.
 - i. **Example:** Team A starts on offense and chooses to go for one point from the 5-yard line and is successful. Team B is then on offense and can choose to either go for one point from the 5-yard line to tie and force a second round of overtime or to go for two points from the 10-yard line for the win.
 - ii. If the second team on offense in an overtime round fails to beat or match the team that went first, the team that went first wins.

- c. Both teams must “go for two” from the 10-yard line starting with the third round of overtime.
- d. The final points earned by the winning team in the final overtime will be added onto the winning team’s total score. The losing team will not receive any additional points.
 - i. **Example:** End of regulation time, score is 14-14. Team A scores one point and Team B score two points. Team B wins with a final score of 16-14. Points are only added to total score from final round of overtime.
- e. All regulation period rules and penalties are in effect.
- f. There are no timeouts.

Scoring

1. **Touchdown:** 6 points
2. **PAT** (point after touchdown) **1 point** (5-yard line) or **2 points** (10-yard line)
 - a. Note: 1-point PAT is pass only; 2-point PAT can be run or pass.
3. **Safety:** 2 points
 - a. A safety occurs when the ball-carrier is declared down in his/her own end zone. Runners can be called down when their flags are pulled by a defensive player, a flag falls out, they step out of bounds, their knee or arm touches the ground, a fumble occurs in the end zone or if a snapped ball lands in or beyond the end zone.
4. A team that scores a touchdown must declare whether it wishes to attempt a 1-point conversion (from the 5-yard line) or a 2-point conversion (from the 10-yard line). Any change, once a decision is made to try for the extra point, requires a charged timeout. A decision cannot be changed after a penalty. Interceptions on conversions cannot be returned.
5. After one team is winning by 28 points or more, the game is over. Once a 28 or more-point advantage is gained, no PAT will be attempted.
6. Forfeits are scored 28-0 for the winning team.

Live Ball/Dead Ball

1. The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.
2. The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage.
 - a. It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on defense or offense enters the neutral zone. Regarding the neutral zone, the official may give both teams a “courtesy” neutral zone notification to allow their players to move back behind the line of scrimmage.
3. A player who gains possession in the air is considered inbounds if one foot comes down in the field of play.
4. The defense may not mimic the offensive team signals by trying to confuse the offensive players, while the quarterback is calling out signals to start the play. This will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.
5. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
6. Any official can whistle the play dead.
7. Play is ruled “dead” when:
 - a. The ball hits the ground.
 - i. If the ball hits the ground as a result of a bad snap, the ball is then placed where the ball hit the ground.
 - b. The ball-carrier’s flag is pulled.
 - c. The ball-carrier steps out of bounds.
 - d. A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored.
 - e. The ball-carrier’s knee or arm hits the ground.
 - f. The ball-carrier’s flag falls out.
 - g. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one or no flag(s).
 - h. The 7 second pass clock expires.
 - i. Inadvertent whistle.

NOTE: There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball-carrier’s feet were at the time of the fumble.

8. If an inadvertent whistle occurs with no time left on the clock at halftime or end of game, the offense will have one untimed down. The offense has two options:
 - a. Take the ball where it was when the whistle blew, and the down is consumed.
 - b. Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.
9. A team can use a timeout to question an official's rule interpretation. If the official's ruling is correct, the team will be charged a timeout. If the rule is interpreted incorrectly, the timeout will not be charged, and the proper ruling will be enforced. Officials should all agree upon any controversial call in order to give each team the full benefit of each call.

Running

1. The ball is spotted where the runner's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ballcarrier has the ball. Forward progress will be measured by the player's front foot.
2. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball. The quarterback is the offensive player who receives the snap.
3. Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Handoffs may be in front, behind or to the side of the offensive player but must be behind the line of scrimmage. The offense may use multiple handoffs.
 - a. **“Center sneak” play is not allowed. The QB is not allowed to handoff to the center on the first handoff of the play.**
4. Absolutely NO laterals of any kind
5. No-run Zones are located 5 yards before each end zone and 5 yards on either side of midfield are designed to avoid short-yardage power-running situations. Teams are not allowed to run in these zones if the subsequent line is LIVE. (Reminder: Each offensive team approaches only TWO no-run zones in each drive – one 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down and one 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD).
6. Any player who receives a handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
7. Once the ball has been handed off in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, all defensive players are eligible to rush.

8. Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding.
9. Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a flag pull.
 - a. Players spinning out of control will be called for flag guarding.
10. Runners may leave their feet if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid collision with another player without a flag guarding penalty enforced.
11. No blocking or “screening” is allowed at any time.
12. Offensive players without the ball must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. No running with the ball-carrier.
13. Flag obstruction – All jerseys MUST be tucked in before play begins. The flags must be on the player’s hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.

Passing

1. All passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward and received beyond the line scrimmage.
 - a. All passes that do not cross the line of scrimmage, whether received or not, are illegal forward passes.
 - b. The quarterback may throw the ball away to avoid a sack. Pass must go beyond the line of scrimmage.
2. Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
3. The quarterback has a seven-second “pass clock.” If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, the play is dead, the down is consumed, and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off, the 7-second rule is no longer in effect.
 - a. If the QB is standing in the end zone at the end of the 7-second clock, the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage (LOS).

Receiving

1. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
2. 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 toward the line of scrimmage.
3. A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.
4. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
5. Interceptions change the possession of the ball at the point of interception. Interceptions are the only changes of possession that do not start on the 5-yard line.
6. Interceptions are returnable but not on conversions after touchdowns.

Rushing the Passer

1. 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 can defend on the line of scrimmage.
2. 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.
3. A legal rush is:
 - a. Any rush from a point 7-yards from the defensive line of scrimmage.
 - b. A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off by the quarterback.
 - c. If a rusher leaves the rush line early (breaks the 7-yard area), they may return to the rush line, reset and then legally rush the quarterback.
 - d. If a rusher leaves the rush line early and the ball is handed off before he/she crosses the line of scrimmage, he/she may legally rush the quarterback.

4. A penalty must be called if:
 - a. The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff or pass – illegal rush (5-yards from the line of scrimmage and first down).
 - b. Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped – offsides (5-yards from line of scrimmage and first down).
 - c. Any defensive player not lined up at the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed or handed off – illegal rush (5-yards from the line of scrimmage and first down).

5. Special Circumstances:
 - a. Teams are not required to rush the quarterback with the seven second clock in effect.
 - b. Teams are not required to identify their rusher before the play.

6. Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however, contact to the QB, unless ruled incidental by the official, would result in a roughing the passer penalty.

7. The offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has the right to a clear path to the quarterback, regardless of where they line up prior to the snap. If the “path or line” is occupied by a moving offensive player, then it is the offense’s responsibility to avoid the rusher. Any disruption to the rusher’s path and/or contact will result in an impeding the rusher penalty. **If the offensive player does not move after the snap, then it is the rusher’s responsibility to go around the offensive player and to avoid contact.**

8. A sack occurs if the quarterback’s flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball is placed where the quarterback’s feet are when flag is pulled.
 - a. A Safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team’s end zone.

Flag Pulling

1. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball-carrier is in full possession of the ball.
2. Defenders can dive to pull flags but cannot tackle, hold or run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.
3. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball-carrier’s possession at any time.

4. If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during the play, the player is down immediately upon possession of the ball and the play ends. The ball is placed where the flag lands.
5. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off a player who is not in possession of the ball.
6. Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball-carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the head, hand, arm or shoulder or intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey.

Formations

1. Offenses must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage (the center) and up to four players on the line of scrimmage. The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.
 - a. One player at a time may go in motion 1-yard behind and parallel to the line of scrimmage.
 - b. No motion is allowed toward the line of scrimmage.
2. Movement by a player who is set or a player who runs toward the line of scrimmage while in motion is considered a false start.
3. The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between his/her legs to a player in the backfield, and the ball must completely leave his/her hands.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

1. If the field monitor or referee witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the referee's discretion. No appeals will be considered. **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!**
2. Offensive or confrontational language is not allowed. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.
3. Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach or official.

4. Ball-carriers MUST try to avoid defenders with an established position.
5. Defenders are not allowed to run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.
6. Unsportsmanlike conduct penalties:
 - a. Defense + 10 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
 - b. Offense - 10 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down

Formations

i. General

1. The referee will call all penalties.
2. Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
3. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted. (Spot fouls)
4. Only the team captain or head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players may not question calls.
5. Games may not end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.
6. Penalties are assessed live ball then dead ball. Live ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered complete.
7. Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.

ii. Defensive Spot Fouls

- Defensive pass interference = Automatic first down
- Holding = +5 yards and automatic first down
- Stripping = +10 yards and automatic first down

iii. Offensive Spot Fouls

- Screening, blocking or running with the ball = -10 yards and loss of down
- Charging = -10 yards and loss of down
- Flag guarding = -10 yards and loss of down

iv. Defensive Penalties

- Defensive unnecessary roughness = +10 yards and automatic first down
- Defensive unsportsmanlike conduct = +10 yards and automatic first down
- Offside = +5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
- Illegal rush (Starting rush from inside 7-yard marker) = +5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down

- Illegal flag pull (Before the receiver has the ball) = +5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
- Roughing the passer = +5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
- Taunting = +5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down

v. **Offensive Penalties**

- Offensive unnecessary roughness = -10 yards and loss of down
- Offensive unsportsmanlike conduct = -10 yards and loss of down
- Offside / false start = -5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
- Illegal forward pass (Any pass received or lands behind the line of scrimmage or throwing a pass after crossing the line of scrimmage) = -5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
- Offensive pass interference = -5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
- Illegal motion (More than one person moving) = -5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
- Delay of game = -5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
- Impeding the rusher = -5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
- Illegal Procedure = -5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down

Protest Procedure

The following **Player Eligibility Protest Procedure** applies to all Thanksgiving Bowl Events:

1. **Who Can Protest:** Player Eligibility Protests can be submitted only by the *HEAD COACH* of a team participating in the same division as the team with the player(s) whose eligibility is being challenged. For a team to submit a protest, the team must provide a written protest form to a tournament representative. For this section tournament representative is defined as follows:
Tournament Director and Head Referee.
2. **The Eligibility Committee shall handle all protest(s).**
Committee consists of:
 - a. Rocky Top Sports World Team Member Representative
 - b. Referee Assignor or Head Referee
 - c. Field Director
3. **What Can Be Protested** (*referee calls cannot be protest as they are final!*):
 - a. Player is beyond age maximum
 - b. Player is not on the tournament team roster

4. **When Can a Protest Be Made:**

- a. *Pre-Game Protest:* A protest of player eligibility may be made at any time prior to a game. Any Pre-Game Protest should be submitted no later than 30 minutes prior to kick-off, so that it may be considered in a timely manner.
 - b. *During-Game Protest:* Any during-game protest of player eligibility must be made before the conclusion of a game between the protesting team and the team with the player(s) whose eligibility is being challenged. Once the protest is filed correctly, then the game shall pause and any player or coach leaving the playing area will be deemed ineligible for play in that game.
 - c. *Protest Limited:* No other player eligibility protests will be considered. A team is deemed to waive any opportunity to protest any player's eligibility not within above protest periods.
5. **How to File Protest:** All protests must be in writing on an official Protest Form and accompanied by the Protest Fee of \$100 cash for each player challenged. The Protest Fee is refundable only if the matter is ruled in the favor of the protesting party. If the Protest is not upheld, the Protest Fee is forfeited. All forfeited protest fees will be applied to charitable activities of GHYAA which include support of youth sports teams and activities.
6. **Protest Upheld:** If a player is ruled ineligible, the player will be prohibited from participating in remaining games of the event. If a during-Game Protest is upheld, that game will be forfeited by the team with the ineligible player. No prior games will be forfeited as teams participating in prior games will have waived their protest opportunity by failing to timely submit an Eligibility Protest. The team will NOT be allowed to continue to participate in the event with the ineligible player(s). The Protest Fee will be refunded to the protesting team for each protest upheld.
7. **Protest Denied:** If the Player Eligibility Protest is denied, the Protest Fee is forfeited.
8. **Ruling Binding:** Any Player Eligibility Protest ruling made by Eligibility Committee is binding upon all coaches, players, and attendees of the event. There is NO further appeal of any upholding or denial of a Player Eligibility Protest.

Concussion Protocol

1. **TN Sports Concussion Law:** The Thanksgiving Bowl will follow the TN Sports Concussion Law. [Link](#)

“To require a youth athlete to be cleared by a licensed health care provider* before returning to play or practice.”

* “Health care provider” means a Tennessee licensed medical doctor, osteopathic physician, clinical neuropsychologist with concussion training, or physician assistant with concussion training who is a member of a health care team supervised by a Tennessee licensed medical doctor or osteopathic physician.

2. Each Head Coach will be required to sign Concussion Signature Form during Weigh Ins.

Coach’s Responsibility

Focus should be on the safety of your players. If you feel your players are at an increased risk of injury due to unsafe playing conditions, do not send them in to play the game. Address any concerns you have before the game starts and the players participate.

Conduct of fans: Fans are a representation of your team and community. If fans are becoming unruly, then it is the coach’s responsibility to keep the order of fans and players at all time. A failure to do so by the coach, will result with the stoppage of play until the situation is resolved.

Weather Refund Policy

No Games Played- 100%

1 Game Played – 50%

2 Games Played – 0%