

## Sports Monster Flag Rugby Rules

### **SAMPLE OF GAME RULES TO LIVE BY:**

- 1. Playing the game:** The objective of the game is to ground the ball over the opponent's try line to score tries. The player in possession of the ball may run, kick or pass the ball attempting to get further downfield and cross the opponent's try line. It is the objective of the team without the ball to prevent this by removing a "flag" from the ball carrier.

The attacking team has 6 "tackles" to place the ball on or over the defending team's try line. After 6 "tackles" a changeover occurs and the defending team then becomes the attacking team.

A player who during play is holding the ball (ball carrier) may be tackled by an opposing player (defending player) or players in order to prevent him/her from running with the ball, kicking or passing the ball to his/her team mates.

A player not in possession of the ball, either a defender or attacker cannot be tagged or obstructed during the game.

Flag Rugby is a non-tackling/minimal-contact game. Accidental contact may occur but contact should be avoided with the onus being on the attacking team to avoid contact.

- 2. Minimum number of players to start:** Matches are coed 7v7 with 4 men and 3 women. All players must be on team's waiver/roster to be considered eligible. A minimum number of 4 players are required to start a game. Matches may be played with 4 men with an automatic 0-5 score.
- 3. Kickoffs:** The kick-off is a place kick (from the ground with NO kicking tee) and must travel 10 yards before anyone can touch it.

If the ball lands in the field of play and then rolls across the try line whether touched or not, a line drop out occurs. A line drop out is a drop kick taken from the center of the defending team's try line.

If the ball lands in the field of play and then rolls across the touchline the receiving team are awarded a changeover 10 yards in from the touchline to where the ball crossed the line.

If the ball goes straight into touch or beyond the try line without bouncing in the field of play the receiving team are awarded a changeover from the kick-off spot.

- 4. Kicking:** Any player is allowed to kick the ball at any point in general play. The ball cannot travel above the shoulder height of the referee.

A player can only dive on a kicked ball as long as there is nobody within 2 yards of the ball and diving player.

A player may not kick a loose ball if an opposing team player is reaching for it with their hands.

All chasing players from the attacking team must be behind the kicker when they kick it in order to be on-side. If the player is in front of the kicker they must wait till the kicker runs past them to put them on-side.

- 5. Passing:** All passes must travel backwards or laterally.

If a player propels the ball in a forward direction with their hand or arm a knock-on will be ruled. A changeover will then be awarded to the non-offending team. The referee may allow the non-offending team to take possession and gain an advantage. If they are tackled it will be a zero tackle, even if advantage is called over by the referee.

If an attacking team player knocks-on and no advantage is gained by the defending team, the ball is returned to the point of the original knock-on and the defending team will receive a changeover.

If the attacking team knocks-on, the defending team may kick the ball to gain an advantage. If this team (defending team at the time of knock-on) then retrieves the ball after the kick, "play on" will be called and the next "tackle" will be counted as a zero tackle.

If the attacking team knocks-on and the defending team immediately kicks through and fails to re-gather the ball, no advantage has been gained by the defending team and the ball will be returned back to the point of the original knock-on and the defending team will receive the changeover.

- 6. Tackling:** The progress of the ball carrier can only be halted if a defender removes one of the attacker's flags.

When a flag is removed, the defender must hold it in the air where the tackle was made, drop it, and assume a marker position directly in front of and no further than 1 yard from the tackled player, or return to the defensive line. The ball carrier must return to the point where the flag was removed and play-the-ball.

When the ball carrier's progress has been halted and they are in the action of playing the ball, the defensive line is set 5 yards back from the play-the-ball area and one defender may act as a marker. The 'marker' player is optional.

The marker and the defensive line can only move forward when the ball is touched by the dummy half. If the dummy half fakes the referee should call "play on" at which point the defensive line can move forward however, the marker must still remain stationary until the defensive line passes them.

If the attacking side fails to score before the sixth tackle has been made, a changeover will be awarded to the defending team at the point where the sixth tackle was effected.

A player may defend with one or no tags, however if he/she receives the ball, they must immediately play-the-ball at the place of receipt and this counts as a tackle.

**7. Scoring:** 1 point is awarded for a male try and 3 points for a female try.

A try is awarded to the attacking team when they ground the ball on or over the try line.

During the play offs, if a game is tied at the end of regulation the game will use the GOLDEN TRY RULE.

**GOLDEN TRY RULE:** Additional time (3 minutes a half) shall be played to determine a winner. The first team to score a try will be deemed the winner. However, if a try is scored immediately from the kick-off in the first set of six tackles, the scoring team must kick off back and allow the opposition to attempt to score a try on their first set of six tackles.

If the referee believes that due to foul play by the defending team the non-offending team has been prevented from scoring an inevitable try, he/she may award a penalty try. A penalty try carries the same number of points as the try which the referee believes would have been scored, including extra points for female scorers.

A try can be scored from a kick in general play if the ball is re-gathered or controlled before the ball touches the ground beyond the try line. If the ball bounces on or beyond the try line, the ball is dead.

A player cannot pass or kick the ball after crossing the try line nor can he/she run back into the field of play whether or not it is to pass the ball back to another player. If this happens a tackle will be counted 5 yards out from the try line where the incident occurred. Any deliberate pass or kick will be instantly counted as a tackle as soon as the ball leaves the hands. If any of these scenarios happen on the sixth tackle, play is restarted with a changeover awarded to the defending team 5 yards out from the try line where the incident occurred.

A player can dive in the air from the field of play while running with the ball to score a try as long as no defender is within tagging distance.

A player can dive in the air from the field of play while chasing a kick to score a try as long as there is nobody from the defending team within 2 yards of the ball and the referee deems there was no risk of collision between opposing team players.

**8. Time-Outs:** There are NO time-outs in rugby.

**9. Running Clock:** Game clock will run two 20 minute halves. There is a 2 minute half time. Clock will only stop for injuries.

Time will be announced throughout the game by the referee at your request. Once the 20 minutes is up for both halves the referee will call "last play" and the game will stop the next time there is a tackle, try or penalty.

**10. Defending Team Infringements:** The referee should consider advantage play prior to penalizing.

Penalties may be awarded at the point of the infringement in the following circumstances:

Defender deliberately moves into the ball carrier's path (without gaining position first) and contact is made, the defender will be judged as initiating this contact.

Defender impedes an attacking player's progress, with or without the ball. A defending player, must in the referee's opinion, be attempting to remove a flag and not deliberately impeding the progress of the ball carrier or any attacking player with their body.

Defender at any time holds onto an attacking player or their uniform.

Defender tackles an attacking player and either fails to return the flag or throws the flag more than 1 yard away from the mark where the tackle was made.

The marker fails to stand directly in-line with the ball player when the ball is being played.

The marker interferes with the ball player at the play-the-ball or moves too early. The marker should make no contact with the ball player.

The marker strikes for the ball whilst the ball is being played.

The marker runs around and retrieves the ball from the dummy half position. Under no circumstances can the marker do this (safety issue).

Defending team player excluding the marker is less than 5 yards from the play-the-ball when the ball is being played. Any penalty given will be awarded at the point where the offside player(s) should have been standing in the defensive line. A defensive player in an offside position may retreat without penalty as long as it is deemed by the referee that they have not influenced, interfered, or impeded play in any way.

Defender removes an attacker's flag when they are not in possession of the ball. If this happens the referee has the following options:

- A) If it is just as the attacker has passed the ball, the Referee should call "Play On, Simultaneous" no action is taken and the attacker must replace the flag before being able to progress the ball downfield.
- B) If it is after the attacker has passed the ball, the Referee should call "Late Tackle, Play On".
- C) If it is after the attacker has kicked the ball, the referee should call "Late Tackle, Play On" and allow the attacking team the opportunity to re-gather the ball. If the referee deems no advantage has been gained by the kicking team they should penalize the defending team where the ball stops, crosses the touch line or try line,

where the opposition takes possession of the ball, or where the late tackle took place, whichever is the greatest advantage.

D) If a defender removes a support player's flag before they receive the ball the referee should call "Pre Tackle" and allow the advantage play. This may result in a player scoring with one or no tags on.

E) If no advantage is gained above the Referee should penalize the defender & may consider the use of the sin bin.

A player pre or late tackled with only one flag still on can only be stopped by removal of the remaining flag. If no flags are on, the player will be deemed "tackled" when a defender comes within tackling distance.

**11. Attacking Team Infringements:** The referee may award a penalty where the infringement occurred in the following circumstances:

Ball carrier attempts to bump or fend off a defender in their attempts to remove a flag or while chasing the ball. The ball carrier can in no way protect his/her flag!

Ball carrier jumps to avoid being tackled. The ball carrier may spin to avoid being tackled as long as they do not initiate contact.

Ball carrier changes direction and steps into a defender endeavoring to make a tackle. Onus is on the ball carrier to avoid contact.

Attacking player blocks the ball carrier. No defender near the ball carrier team can play-on.

Ball player interferes with the marker at the play-the-ball.

Ball is deliberately passed in a forward direction.

When an attacking player is in front of the play the ball they cannot get involved in the next play before retreating behind where the ball was played. If they do the penalty is awarded where they became involved.

Ball carrier dives for a try when a defending team player is within tagging distance.

**12. Penalties:** Penalties are taken by a tap kick in any direction after the referee has verbally and physically indicated the mark. (A tap kick can go higher than shoulder height).

If a penalty kick is not taken on the mark designated by the referee, the referee will stop play and ask the team to take the tap kick again.

Offending team must retire 10 yards from the penalty mark or to the try line if nearer.

If a kicker is interfered with after kicking the ball or one of his teammates giving chase, the penalty will be awarded where the ball stops, crosses the touch line or try line (no closer than 10 yards to either line), where the opposition takes possession of the ball, or where the infringement took place, whichever is the greatest advantage.

If misconduct occurs on any player as they are chasing a kick and the ball rolls over or lands over the try line on the full, the penalty will be awarded to the non-offending team, either 10 yards from the try line in the field of play and opposite to where the ball crossed the try line or at the point where the player was impeded, whichever is the greatest advantage to the non-offending team.

**13. Forfeits:** A game forfeit will automatically score the offending team in the standings as **-3 standing points, 0-1 game, and 0-50 points**. Although SMC does not have monetary forfeit penalties, any team that forfeits three regular season matches for any reason shall automatically be removed from playoff contention.

Forfeited points will start to be declared if there are less than the required number of rostered/registered players available to start a match. Five forfeit points will be awarded for every of the following time limits:

- 11 minutes after scheduled game time = 5 points
- 16 minutes after scheduled game time = 10 points
- 21 minutes after scheduled game time = forfeit.

If a team does have less than the required number of players, your SMC referee will get everyone playing a scrimmage starting 10 minutes into the hour. As late players arrive, it is up to the short-staffed team captain to let the referee know when they have enough to play so that the game may immediately be started. In such cases, accumulated forfeited points shall be announced starting the score and actual time played may be shortened and still be considered a legal game. In addition, such games shall end exactly as originally scheduled.

**14. Good Sportsmanship:** Please observe the rules of good sportsmanship during your time with us. SMC understands that competition can generate strong emotions, however, your

emotions/actions must not affect the enjoyment/comfort/safety of any of our participants. Foul language is not acceptable whether you are playing in Park District, private venues or various school facilities. It is imperative that your language be a reflection of civility and good sportsmanship. Taunting opponents is not acceptable. Tantrums (throwing objects, yelling) are not acceptable.

Team captain may approach the SMC ref for consideration if they feel that bad sportsmanship is being displayed by one or more of the opposing team. At the discretion of the SMC ref, any displays of bad sportsmanship will result in the following penalties:

**By Team:** 1<sup>st</sup> = warning, 2<sup>nd</sup> = penalty, 3<sup>rd</sup> = penalty try, 4<sup>th</sup> = game forfeit

**By Individual:** 1<sup>st</sup> = warning, 2<sup>nd</sup> = five minute sin-bin, 3<sup>rd</sup> = Definite 2 week suspension and possible league expulsion pending League review.

**Any physical altercation (hard fouls, rabble rousing, etc.)** will result in an automatic game ejection and a two game suspension. Sports monster has a **zero tolerance policy** for fighting. The league will expel players involved in a fight and no refunds will be provided. Teams are responsible for their players' actions and failure for any player to follow the referee's immediate ruling may result in team penalties.

**Any physical contact with referee** will result in immediate league expulsion and offending player may be subject to legal action.

- 15. Referees:** Referees are paid directly from the league as part of your league fee. Any referee asking for payment should be reported to your local office immediately.

Players should expect SMC referees to be in appropriate attire, clearly announce what tackle the team is on, score and whistle penalties. SMC referees are also expected to be actively moving on the field to keep the game going quickly.

SMC referees are there to make the game run smoothly and error-free as possible. Obviously, no one is perfect and there may be occasions to question an individual call if the referee has not already offered an explanation.

The only person allowed to openly question a referee's call is the **Team's Captain**. The key word here is "questions." Question does not mean challenge, criticize or demean in any way the referee's call. All questions shall be civil (be aware of your tone of voice) and solely for an explanation of a call. As many games are fast paced and/or the ball is still in play

when a call is made, it may not be possible for a referee to provide a complete explanation immediately and patience must be expected. Should any other person other than the captain question the referee during a game, a changeover will occur.

Whether you agree or not, the referee's judgement is the final word during the game and an appeal may be filed with the SMC office following the game. If you have an ongoing problem with a referee, please call the SMC rep immediately at the phone number listed at the end of the rulebook.

Referees are not on the field to be the subject of abuse and are to be treated as you would want to be treated if you were in their position. SMC views any abusive language or physical action against a referee to be beyond the boundaries of sportsmanship and separate penalties for infractions will be enforced with the possibility of additional league sanctions to offending players or teams:

- a) Any foul or abusive language directed at the referee shall result in game ejection.
- b) Any foul or abusive language expressed within earshot of the referee regarding his/her calls will result in automatic warning. A second offense shall result in game ejection.
- c) Any physical altercation with the referee shall result in league expulsion and possible legal action. Throwing equipment at or bumping into the referee is included in this rule.

Pre-game, halftime and post-game are all considered to be part of your scheduled league play. So keep it zipped and you won't get zapped out of the game.

In the unlikely event a referee is not in attendance for a regular season match and the field is set-up for play, it is expected that teams will play the match under courtesy self-calls and report the score and situation to the SMC office or onsite manager.

**16. Player eligibility:** All players **MUST** sign the League's Liability Waiver to play in any SMC league. Failure or refusal to sign SMC liability waiver form shall result in the player not being allowed to participate in league. Any player found to be playing without signing the liability waiver shall be immediately suspended from that match and may only return to play upon signing the liability waiver following that match. There are NO exceptions for failure to agree to waive liability. Player must also be sure to sign the appropriate team's waiver or could be ruled ineligible. Waiver forms are available at the field or information table.

*Note: Your team's waiver of liability form is the actual team roster. Submitted registration rosters are not considered official until each player has signed the waiver of liability and participated in league play.*

All players must be 19 years of age or older - picture ID's must be produced upon request of referee or league official. Failure to produce accurate picture ID upon request shall result in removal of player from match play until such time as proof of age/identity can be verified.

To be eligible for playoffs, all players must have participated in a minimum of two week's matches.

**17. Substitutions:** During the regular season, teams may bring as many subs as they need each week. All subs MUST fill out the team waiver prior to playing. Any sub playing more than one match MUST be added to the team roster with payment. Failure to register a new sub will result in that player not being allowed to play.

Substitutes from other flag rugby teams are allowed and encouraged. Opposing team may not challenge a Sports Monster substitute. However, teams may ONLY pick up the number of subs needed to fill a full team. There can be no players on the sidelines. If regular rostered players arrive late, league subs are to be removed at the next changeover.

Opposing team may challenge suspected ineligible substitute to Flag Rugby rep, but this must be done before game begins.

**There is ONE intra (meaning from another same day) league sub allowed for playoffs.**

**NO OUTSIDE SUBSTITUTES ARE ALLOWED IN THE PLAYOFFS.**

You must play with your registered players in the playoffs. Registered players will be defined as those on the waiver by the sixth week and listed on the online roster. Players who have attended at least two (2) regular season games will be considered regular roster/registered players and the team must be in compliance for online roster and waiver information. There is only one exception: If you know that you will be unable to complete the season, notify Sports Monster at least one week prior to the playoffs. Upon approval, your substitute may take your place and may not successfully be challenged by opposing captain. A forfeit will automatically score the offending team as 50-0 loss.

**NO LEAGUE SUBSTITUTIONS ARE ALLOWED IN SEMI-FINAL OR FINAL MATCH--YOU MUST PLAY WITH YOUR REGISTERED PLAYERS.**

**18. Field Boundaries:** Lines or cone markers indicate out of bounds. Referee will make judgement calls if a player has stepped out or not.

**19. Equipment:** SMC will provide rugby balls, referees and equipment for game of play.

**20. Attire:** Shoes, shirts & shorts (or sweats) required. Please note that shorts or pants with pockets are strongly discouraged. Buy some cheap shorts to avoid thumbs getting caught in your nether regions – ouch...or cheap action! No metal cleats are allowed. Molded and screw in rubber cleats are fine.

We strongly recommend all players wear a protective mouthpiece at all times during a game.

Same color shirts are required. This means if you are green, everyone wears green and not a skittles rainbow of shirts. Ain't nobody got time for that! No numbers required. Bring a white tee shirt in case your opponent is wearing a color similar to yours. Home team always has uniform priority as they registered before the visiting team.

Shirts must be tucked in for flag rugby. Any shirts hanging over or covering the flag belt shall be immediately called for flag guarding.

**21. Have Fun:** This is your leisure time so please enjoy it. You're not playing for money, only the pride and prestige a Sports Monster championships brings and the adoration of thousands of residents wishing they were you, a Sports Monster.

Thank you for playing with Sports Monster. We hope that you enjoy your Flag Rugby experience! Please feel free to submit questions or rules suggestions to us. Web info online: Sportsmonster.net – Email questions to [info@sportsmonster.net](mailto:info@sportsmonster.net)

We'll see you on the fields!



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