



GHSA GIRLS' FLAG FOOTBALL PLAYING REGULATIONS

GENERAL INFORMATION (Revised 8/1/21)

- A. **Girls' Flag Football** is a state championship event organized on an Area basis in three divisions with eight areas in each classification, playing during the late Fall each year.
1. 1st Practice Date: September 20
 2. 1st Game Date: October 7
 3. Last Game Date: November 20
 4. 1st Round State Tournament: November 30
 5. 2nd Round State Tournament: November 30
 6. 3rd Round State Tournament: December 2
 7. Semifinal Round State Tournament: December 6
 8. Championship Finals: December 9 – GSU Stadium
- B. **GAMES ALLOWED** - The maximum number of games allowed (not including the State Tournament) shall be ten (12) and one (1) invitational tournament.
1. Host schools shall schedule a minimum of two (2) games each playing date.
 2. Teams shall not play more than (2) games each playing date.
 3. Games played in an invitational tournament do not count in the total number of (12) games allowed, but if played in an Area Tournament they do count toward the maximum number of games allowed. Maximum of four (4) games to be played in an invitational tournament.
 4. Teams are allowed to play (1) scrimmage/jamboree play date after the 1st official practice date, and prior to the 1st regular season game of participating schools.
 5. Beginning and ending dates are listed on the GHSA Calendar and in the front of this publication.
- C. **PARTICIPATION** - The intent to participate must be submitted on the "Intent to Participate" no later than March 1 each year.
- D. **GHSA STATE ADOPTED PLAYING RULES**
1. **The Official NIRSA Rulebook will govern play with the exceptions listed.**
 2. The game shall be played between (2) teams of (7) players each.
 - a. Teams may start, or finish, the game with (6) players.
 3. The games shall be regulated under the supervision of (3) GHSA registered contest officials.
 - a. Three (3) minutes prior to the start of each game both head coaches, team captains, and the officiating crew shall conduct a pregame conference. It is the responsibility of each head coach to insure their players are legally equipped and meet uniform standards.
 - b. Each team shall designate a "speaking captain" to appropriately address the officials and request timeouts.
 - c. Officials' game fees are located in Appendix "F" of this publication, and are the responsibility of the "host school".
- E. **PLAYING FIELD/ ECO/ FIELD EQUIPMENT**
1. The field dimensions shall be; min.-max. of 35- 40 yards wide and 80 yards long.
 - a. (NOTE- schools may use lacrosse lines on the synthetic turf fields)
 - b. Provide an ECO (Electronic Clock Operator) for each game (see attached for instructions)
 - c. An official down marker "the down box" to be used by the team occupying the side opposite of the press-box. Instructions to be provided by the officials prior to the game.
 - d. The official ball to be used in the semifinal and championship games is; Wilson 1784 TDY

F. TIMING REGULATIONS (NOTE: Game time is forfeit time)

1. The length of the game shall be 40-minutes, divided into two halves of 20-minutes, with a 5-minute halftime interval (3-minutes if overtime is required).
 - a. The game will be played using a “running clock”.
 1. The clock starts when the ball is legally snapped and will run continuously for the first 19-minutes unless it is stopped for a team timeout or a referee stoppage of play.
 2. Each team is entitled to (3) charged timeouts per game and must be requested by the designated team captain or Head Coach. Any unused timeouts will not carry over into overtime.
 3. On or near the 1-minute point in each half the Referee shall stop the clock and inform both teams of the remaining playing time, this clock stoppage may be used by the team as an uncharged time-out. The clock will start at the snap following the one-minute warning.
 - a. During the final 1-minute of each half the clock will be stopped for the following, and resume on the snap of the next play:
 1. Incomplete pass attempt, out-of-bounds, score, team timeout, fair catch, penalty administration, referee timeout, touchback, and/or change of possession.
 4. Prior to the beginning of the game, or during the halftime intermission, the playing time may be shortened by mutual agreement of both teams.
 5. In the event of a tie game (including regular season) the “OVERTIME” procedure shall be:
 - a. After a 3-minute intermission, a coin-flip with the team captains and the referee shall be conducted in order to determine possession and direction to start the overtime period.
 - b. The winner of the coin-flip shall have the options to start on offense, defense, or direction. The loser of the coin-flip will have the choice of the remaining options.
 - c. Each team is entitled to 1 time-out per overtime period. Any unused timeouts will not carry over to the next overtime period.
 - d. For the first two overtime possessions the scoring team will be permitted to go to for 1 point, 2 points or three points on their PAT attempt. After the second overtime period the scoring team must go for 2 points following each touchdown.
 - e. The offensive team (Team A) will start from the opponent 15-yard line and have four downs to score a touchdown, followed by the opponent (Team B) having the same opportunity to score.
 1. If still tied, the procedure will be repeated with teams (in the second overtime Team B will now be on offense first and Team A will not be on defense). Teams will continue to flip possession for each subsequent overtime period until a winner is determined.

NOTE: The referee shall have the authority to correct all obvious timing errors, but must be corrected prior to the ball becoming live after the error occurred.

G. PLAYER UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

1. Jerseys/Shirts – The home team shall wear matching “dark” jerseys or shirts with contrasting numbers not less than 6” in height on the back. The visiting team shall wear “white” jerseys/shirts with contrasting numbers not less than 6” in height on the back. If jerseys are less than 4” above the waist they must remain tucked in at all times OR if at least 12” below the waist it may remain untucked.
2. Headwear – Players may wear a knit stocking cap, elastic headband, or a cap without a bill. Players are not permitted to wear bandanas. A soft pliable and non-abrasive protective headgear is recommended.
3. Mouthpieces are Mandatory for all players and must cover all teeth.
4. Game Ball – The official game ball shall be a “youth” ball and shall meet all the other specifications for the regulation GHSA football game ball. NOTE: The GHSA Office will provide game balls for the State Semifinals and Finals.
5. Illegal Uniforms & Equipment (Penalty- 5 yards) Jerseys/Shirts shall be tucked in at all times or meet the 4” above or 12” below rule. NOTE: Referee may send off players who do not conform.
6. **All Flag Belts MUST meet NIRSA Standards and shall be a color that contrasts with the color of the game shorts/pants. (Quick Release Belt W/3 Flags)**

H. SCORING

1. All touchdowns shall be (6) points, and extra points shall be either (1), (2) or (3) points.
 - a. Teams have the options to attempt the extra point from the 3-yard line for one point, from the 10-yard line for two points, or from the 15-yard line for three points. NOTE: The field captain will confer the choice to the referee following a touchdown. Once the spotters have been placed a team cannot change their mind unless they are able to use a remaining timeout.
 - b. The Defense cannot score on an extra point try. The ball is dead on the change of possession.
2. A safety shall be (2) points.
 - a. Following a safety or touchback, the ball is spotted of the offenses own 14-yard line. 1st down and 6 yards to go.
3. Sportsmanship Rule – If a team is leading by 19 or more points at the 1-minute point or less in the second half, the game shall be officially finished.

I. STATE TOURNAMENT

1. Each area will be responsible for determining the four (4) teams advancing to the State Tournament, with sixteen (32) teams in each division advancing to the first round.
2. During the first two (2) rounds, the higher seed in each of the four-team quadrants will host three games to be played on the same date. A universal coin toss will determine the host schools for subsequent rounds when teams of equal seeds remain in the same quadrant.
3. The semifinals and championship finals for each division will be played at a neutral site to be determined by the GHSA Executive Director, and the “Home” team will be indicated on the bracket.

J. PLAYER AND COACH CONDUCT

1. Non-physical unsporting acts include, but are not limited to; profane/inappropriate/obscene language or gestures, taunting or baiting an opponent, disconcerting acts prior to the snap in an attempt to interfere with the offensive signals, disrespecting a game referee.
2. Physical unsporting acts include, but are not limited to; kicking, striking or attempting to kick or strike an opponent, spiking the ball, illegal participation.

NOTE: The penalty for an unsporting act is **10 yards**. **The 2nd unsporting act results in the ejection of the offending player(s) or coach and a 1-game suspension. Ejections for fighting carry a 2-game suspension penalty.**

K. OTHER PLAYING RULES AND DEFINITIONS MAY BE FOUND IN THE “FLAG FOOTBALL” SECTION ON THE GHSA WEBSITE.²⁰

PLAYING TERMS

Screen Blocking – Screen blocking is the legal act of obstructing an opponent’s movement without making physical contact. All screen blocking shall be without physical contact, by keeping the hands and arms at the side or behind the back. They may not use their hands/ arms in front of their chest. Players shall not block by interlocking with a teammate. The penalty is **10 yards using the All But One Principle**). There shall be NO moving screens by the offensive player beyond the LOS. Offensive players beyond the LOS may set a standing pick (similar to basketball) or may follow the play in the event of a backward lateral pass (pitch play).

Diving – A runner **with the ball is allowed to dive** and a receiver may jump or dive to catch a pass. Defensive players may jump or dive to defend a pass and/or dive to pull a flag.

Illegal Pass – A forward pass is illegal if the passer’s foot is beyond the line of scrimmage, the ball is intentionally thrown to the ground or out of bounds to avoid a loss of yardage, or if there is more than one forward pass. (NOTE- there is no inside or outside of the tackle box in flag football since all players are eligible to receive a pass.) **The penalty is 5 yards from the spot of the foul and LOSS of down.**

Defensive Pass Interference- Penalty is 10 yards and repeat the down

Offensive Pass Interference- Penalty is 10 yards and repeat the down.