



# Flag Football Manual

## *Rules, Regulations, & Training Information*

The official Special Olympics Sports Rules in this manual shall govern all tournament play. In cases not covered by these rules, Special Olympics North America flag football rules will govern play.

Updated September 2015

**Special Olympics**  
Kentucky



# FLAG FOOTBALL MANUAL

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# DIVISIONING

## Introduction

- Special Olympics has developed modified rules, when necessary, in order to maximize the successful participation of all athletes and encourage competition throughout every level of the organization.
- The fundamental difference which sets Special Olympics competitions apart from those of other sports organizations is that athletes of all ability levels are encouraged to participate and every athlete is recognized for his or her performance.
- Competitions are structured so that athletes compete with other athletes of similar ability in equitable divisions. Historically, Special Olympics has suggested that all divisions can be created where the variance between the highest and lowest scores within that division differs by no more than 15%. This is NOT a rule, but should be used as a guideline for establishing equitable divisions when the number of athletes competing is appropriate.

## PROCEDURES FOR DIVISIONING

- ABILITY is the primary divisioning factor in Special Olympics. An entry score from a prior competition or a preliminary event determines the ability of an athlete or team. The other 2 criteria used for divisioning are age and sex.
- Ideally, competition is enhanced when all divisions accommodate at least three (3) and no more than eight (8) competitors or teams of similar ability. In some cases, however, the number of athletes or teams within a competition will be insufficient to achieve this goal. The following procedures describe the sequential process of creating equitable divisions by the event and also provides guidance for managing athlete participation when factors preclude ideal divisioning.

# Team Sports

## A. Step One: Divide Teams By Gender

1. Divide teams into two groups based upon gender. Female teams shall compete against other female teams and male teams shall compete against other male teams.
2. Teams shall compete against other teams of the same gender, unless:
  - a. There is only one male or one female team within the competition. This team shall be divisioned with teams of the opposite gender who are of similar age and ability.

## B. Step Two: Divide Teams By Age

1. The age group of a team is determined by the age of the oldest athlete on that team on the opening date of the competition.
2. Divide male and female teams into the following age groups: ages 15 and under; ages 16-21; and ages 22 and over. An additional group may be established if there is a sufficient number of teams in the "22 and over" age group.
3. Teams should compete against other teams within the same age group.

## C. Step Three: Divide Teams By Ability

1. All Special Olympics team sport competitions shall utilize the results of qualifying tournaments and games to assess the level of ability of the participating teams.
2. Group teams according to ability based upon the results of qualifying tournaments and games.
3. Create divisions of no more than eight teams by applying age groups to the teams within each ability group.
4. Within each ability group, age groups may be combined to create divisions.
5. If there are only two male or two female teams within the competition, these teams shall compete against each other.
6. If there is only one team within an age or ability group, that team must be divisioned with other teams, regardless of age or ability.
  - In most cases, preference will be given to ability.

## **DIVISION CRITERIA FOR FLAG FOOTBALL**

**These criteria should be used as a guide when trying to determine at what level your team should compete. If you are having trouble divisioning your team, please contact the SOKY Office or a Flag Football Sport Development Team Member for help.**

### **B DIVISION**

- Following rules is a challenge.
- Low skills and athleticism.
- Little strategy and no organized plays.
- Players not able to catch a pass while running.
- Not influenced by the way the other team plays.
- Quarterback with limited accuracy and arm strength.
- Defensive skills limited.

### **1A DIVISION**

- Plays by regulation rules.
- Average skills and athleticism.
- Some strategy and runs general plays.
- A couple of players can catch a pass while running.
- Limited ability to react to the way the other team plays.
- Quarterback with accurate or strong arm.
- Defense has difficulty playing aggressively without being physical.

### **2A DIVISION**

- Plays by regulation rules.
- High to excellent skills and athleticism.
- Implements strategies and runs specific plays.
- Several players can catch a pass while running.
- Reacts to the way the other team plays.
- Quarterback with accurate and strong arm.
- Defense able to play aggressively without being physical.

**Fair athletic competition creates an opportunity for each athlete or team to play at his/her best. You are strongly encouraged to place athletes on teams where all members have an equal chance to perform as contributing team members. An athlete should never be placed on a team where he/she is only a position and not a contributor. The best coach strives to create a team that practices, plays and contributes as a whole. The team will always be stronger than any one player.**

## FLAG FOOTBALL SPORT DEVELOPMENT TEAM (SDT)

SOKY would like to recognize the following individuals for serving on the Flag Football Sport Development Team members will be busy throughout the football season as they will be viewing teams on screening days, attending and helping with Tournaments, evaluating the program and assisting in the future development of SOKY Flag Football.

Please feel free to call or email any member of the Team if you should have any questions or comments.

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# FLAG FOOTBALL

The official Special Olympics Sports Rules shall govern all Special Olympics Flag Football competitions including tournament play.

## Official Events

1. Team Competition (5 on 5)
2. Skills Competition

**\* There must be statewide interest for any event in order to justify state level competition.**

The SOKY Flag Football season runs **September** through **November**. Teams will qualify for the State Tournament by participating in **ONE** of the two sanctioned SOKY Regional Tournaments. These tournaments must be held within the official SOKY Flag Football Season. If a third Regional Tournament is added, teams will have to compete in at least two of the three sanctioned SOKY Regional Tournaments in order to qualify for the State Tournament.

## **SECTION A - GENERAL RULES**

1. The Sport Development Team shall make all final decisions on rule changes, dress codes, event locations, etc.
2. Special Olympics Flag Football is non-contact. In all aspects of Special Olympics Flag football, rulings shall be made with player safety as the primary consideration.
3. An intermediate (youth) size football will be used in all divisions.
4. A one-piece three flag belt will be worn by all athletes during the games. These belts must be of different color than the predominant color of the team uniforms and the team shorts/pants. They must be a different color for visual purposes. Belts MUST be worn on offense and defense. If belts are not in compliance or found to be altered in any way to prevent being pulled off as easily, an unsportsmanlike penalty will be assessed. If there are repeat offenders, these athletes will be ejected from the game.
5. Athletes are also required to wear a protective mouth piece that is NOT white or clear. All mouthpieces MUST be colored. For visual and emergency purposes, mouth pieces MUST also have at least a 4 inch stem on them. Lanyards that are connected to mouthpieces are not allowed to be worn.
6. All levels and divisions will play on a field that is ideally 60 yards long (including end zones) and 25 yards wide. The actual size will be determined by the space available at a particular venue. If insufficient space is available, a slightly smaller space can be used. A space of at least 5 yards around the field must be free and clear of obstructions. The field can be marked with chalk, paint and/or traffic cones.
7. All forms, fees, etc MUST be returned to the SOKY office on or before the required deadline. If not returned by this date, you may not be allowed to participate in that event.
8. EACH TEAM IS REQUIRED TO PLAY ALL TEAM MEMBERS IN EVERY GAME PLAYED.

## **SECTION B - DIVISIONS**

1. Competitors in flag football will compete in one of two age groups:
  - a. Junior: ages 15 and under
  - b. Open Age Group: 16 and over
2. Players under the age of 16 may play on an open division team, but players over age 16 may NOT play on a junior team.
3. Divisions will be established according to ability.
4. All co-ed teams will compete in male divisions. (Every effort will be made to provide appropriate competition for every team)



## SECTION C - PROPER ATTIRE

1. All players must wear matching numbered uniforms. Numbers must be on both the **front and back** of the uniform, and must be tucked in at the waist. Jerseys must be long enough to be tucked in. No mid-drift jerseys.
2. All players must wear rubber cleated or flat-soled athletic shoes. Metal cleats, spikes, hiking boots or other equipment deemed dangerous by officials will not be allowed. Flag football is played in all weather conditions (rain, snow, mud, etc.); therefore, proper shoes become an important part of the uniform.
3. No blue jean shorts or pants, or denim of any kind are allowed. All team members must wear shorts or pants that are the same color, and these must also have **NO POCKETS!** Shorts must properly fit the athlete.
4. Stocking caps and football-approved gloves are acceptable in cold weather. Skull caps may be worn to protect an athlete's head from the sun.
5. Those players who wear eyeglasses while playing are required to wear a strap to hold the glasses in place.
6. No jewelry is permitted by any athlete unless for medical reasons. In these cases, athletes should wear tape or a sweatband to cover it.

## SECTION D – EQUIPMENT

1. An intermediate (youth) size football will be used in all divisions of flag football. Leather, synthetic leather, or rubber footballs are appropriate for use in training and competition. The ball should be properly inflated and inspected periodically for defects or damage. Nerf® footballs may be used in training to assist athletes who are having difficulty catching the ball, but cannot be used in competition.
2. A protective mouth piece must be worn at all times during training and competition. These mouthpieces need to be colored, NOT white or clear. White or clear mouthpieces will not be permitted. For visual and emergency purposes, mouth pieces MUST also have at least a 4 inch stem on them. Mouthpieces can be found in most athletic supply stores. Lanyards to hold mouth pieces are not allowed.
3. A one-piece, three flag belt is the required flag belt for competition. This is a belt with the flags permanently attached. Team belts MUST be of different color than the predominant color of the team uniforms and shorts/pants. This is for visual purposes. Other styles of belts (velcro or two-flag) may be used in training, but cannot be used in competition. If belts are not in compliance or found to be altered in any way to prevent being pulled off as easily, an unsportsmanlike penalty will be assessed. If there are repeat offenders, these athletes will be ejected from the game.

***\*Athletes who do not have the proper equipment/uniforms will NOT be allowed to participate until they do. Teams who do NOT bring their own belts and have to borrow belts will be assessed a 6 point penalty for each game that they do not have their belts. If there are no belts to borrow, that team will have to forfeit their games.***

## **SECTION E - GAME ROSTER**

1. All team members must be listed on the Official Team Roster. THE MINIMUM ALLOWED PER TEAM IS 5 PLAYERS AND THE MAXIMUM IS 15 PLAYERS. (SOKY strongly encourages teams to have at least 8 players on a roster. This will allow you flexibility and the option of competing if an athlete on the roster becomes ill, needs to work, etc.)
2. A team must have a minimum of five (5) players to start a game (required). Teams may continue with a minimum of four (4) players, if necessary due to disqualification or injury.

**TEAM ROSTERS WILL BE DECLARED "FROZEN" ON SEPTEMBER 29<sup>TH</sup>. No changes can be made to this roster after the 29th.**

- **EXCEPTION:** If a team attends a screening session AFTER the October 15th deadline that team roster will not be frozen until a final decision is made by the screening team (SDT), concerning the team's division.
- **NO APPEALS MAY BE MADE.**

## **SECTION F - THE GAME**

1. All games will consist of two 20-minute halves (running time), UNTIL the last minute of each half, at which the clock will stop on all dead ball whistles (i.e. incomplete pass, out of bounds, change of possession, etc.)
2. There will be a five (5) minute break at halftime (between the 1st and 2nd halves).
3. Each team is entitled to TWO regular (60 second) time-outs per half. Any unused time-outs in the first half do **NOT** carry over to the second half. Only the Captain or Coach can call the time outs.
  - The clock will stop on all time-outs.
4. Officials can stop the clock at their own discretion (injuries, delays, etc.).
5. In the **B division ONLY**, one coach per team is allowed on the field at all times. They may assist in the offensive huddles, defensive huddles, and/or placement of athletes on the field. He/she must relocate and be out of the way when the ball is snapped.
6. **Overtime:** If the score is tied at the end of regulation play.
  - a. A coin toss is held to determine first possession.

- b. Each team receives one play from midfield.
- c. The team gaining the most points or gaining a yardage advantage is awarded one (1) extra point and wins the game.
  - If both teams score a touchdown, or gain the same yardage, the procedure is repeated until one team wins.
  - If the team with the first attempt in overtime scores on the first play, the opposing team must score on its first play also.
  - An interception in overtime is worth 0 yards. There is no advantage for the defensive team for an interception.

#### **7. Scoring:**

- a. Touchdown: 6 points
- b. Extra Point:
  - 1 point (from the 5-yard line)
  - 2 points (from the 10-yard line)
- c. Safety:
  - 2 points
- d. No Kicking!
- e. Penalty for having to borrow flags: 6 points awarded to opposing team when the game begins.

#### **8. Coin Toss:**

- a. A coin toss determines the first possession.
- b. Each team will provide 2 captains.
- c. The officials and team captains will meet 3 minutes prior to the start of the game to conduct the coin toss.
- d. The winner of the coin toss will choose offense or defense. Whichever team is on defense after the opening coin toss will choose which direction of play for the first half. In the second half, everything will be the opposite. The team that was on offense in the first half will be on defense, and both teams will travel in the opposite direction of the first half.

#### **9. Possessions:**

- a. All possessions, except following an interception, start at the offensive team's 5-yard line.
- b. The offense has 4 plays to cross mid-field.
- c. Once the offense crosses mid-field, they have 4 additional plays to score a touchdown.
- d. If the offensive team fails to cross mid-field or score a touchdown in the prescribed number of plays, possession of the ball changes and the opposite team starts at their 5-yard line.
- e. Interceptions change the possession of the ball at the point of the interception. A ball intercepted in the end zone is spotted at the 5-yard line.

- f. In the 1A & 2A divisions, each team has 30 seconds to snap the ball after the ball is spotted (marked ready for play by the Official). In the B division, teams have 45 seconds to snap the ball after it is spotted.
- g. Once the ball is snapped to the quarterback, he/she has **6 seconds** to get rid of the ball. If he/she is still in possession of the ball when the official reaches a 6 second count, the play will be blown dead which will result in a loss of down.

### **10. Positions/Snap:**

- a. The ball must be snapped between the legs to start each play.
- b. No minimum number of players is required to line up on the line of scrimmage.
- c. The person who handles/possesses the snap cannot run the ball unless he/she hands the ball off first.

### **11. Rushing the QB:**

- a. All players that rush the quarterback must be a minimum of 5 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. A special marker, placed by the official, will designate the spot 5 yards from the line of scrimmage.
- b. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend the line of scrimmage.
- c. Once the quarterback hands off the ball, the 5-yard zone no longer exists, and all defenders are eligible to rush.
- d. The defense cannot initiate any contact with the quarterback.

### **12. Running:**

- a. The quarterback (player receiving the snap) cannot run the ball, unless he/she hands the ball off first.
- b. Only direct hand-offs behind the line of scrimmage are legal. Laterals and pitches are not allowed.
- c. The player who takes a hand-off can pass the ball, as long as he/she does not pass the line of scrimmage.
- d. "No Running Zones" are located 5 yards before the mid-field line and goal line. Any ball snapped from these zones must be passed. The purpose of "No Running Zones" is to avoid short yardage power running situations.
- e. The ball carrier may NOT spin, dive, hurdle or use either arm to shield a defender from grasping his/her flag.
- f. The ball is marked at the spot where the position of the ball is when the player is declared down (carrier's flag belt is pulled or falls off, or hand/knee touches ground).

### 13. Passing and Receiving:

- a. All passes must be forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage.
- b. All players are eligible to receive a forward pass, including the quarterback if he/she is legally handed-off.
- c. A shovel pass is legal as long as the forearm is above the elbow. No underhand pitches or throws.
- d. Only one player is allowed in motion at the snap and he/she may not be moving toward the line of scrimmage at the snap.
- e. A player must have at least one foot in bounds when making a catch.
- f. Interceptions change possession of the ball at the point of the interception. (Exception: A ball intercepted in the end zone is spotted at the 5-yard line.) Interceptions can NOT be returned.

### 14. Dead Balls/Fumbles:

- a. There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where it hits the ground.
- b. Play is ruled dead when:
  - the ball carrier's flag is pulled.
  - the ball carrier loses his/her flag.
  - the ball carrier steps out of bounds.
  - the ball carrier's knee or hand touches the ground.
  - a touchdown, extra point or safety is scored.
  - during a try-for-point the defense obtains possession of the ball.
  - a forward pass strikes the ground or is caught simultaneously by opposing players (the offensive retains possession).
  - a pass is intercepted (no returns).
  - a snapped ball touches the ground.
  - there is an inadvertent whistle.
  - a receiver catches a ball without his/her flags attached.
  - the quarterback is still in possession of the ball after the 6 second count by the official.

### 15. Penalties:

- a. All penalties are assessed from the line of scrimmage.
- b. No penalty may take the ball more than half the distance to the offender's goal line.
- c. Coaches will have the opportunity to decline or accept the penalty based on the result of the play.
- d. Sportsmanship/Roughing: The officials will disqualify any player who participates in rough or unsportsmanlike play. No warning is required.
- e. **Offense: 10 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down.**
  - Illegal Motion (more than 1 player moving at snap, moving forward at snap)
  - Offside (in neutral zone at snap, false start)
  - Illegal Forward Pass (not beyond line of scrimmage; Partner to Partner)

- Illegal Procedure (quarterback run)
  - Pass Interference (picking or pushing defender)
  - Illegal Contact (holding, blocking, bumping)
  - Flag Guarding (diving, spinning, warding off)
  - Delay of Game (failing to snap within 30 seconds of ready)
  - Unsportsmanlike Conduct (improper use of flag belt)
- f. Defense: 10 yards from the line of scrimmage automatic first down.**
- Offside (in or beyond neutral zone at snap)
  - Pass interference
  - Illegal Contact (holding, blocking or bumping)
  - Illegal Flag Pull (before receiver has ball)
  - Illegal Rushing (rushing quarterback inside 5-yard limit)

## 16. Supplement to the Rules:

- a. **Delay of Game:** The ball must be put in play promptly and legally and any action or lack of action by either team that tends to prevent this is considered a delay of game. This includes:
  - Interrupting the 30 second (or 45 second for B division) count for any reason except for a granted time-out.
  - Consuming more than 30 seconds (or 45 seconds for B division) to snap the ball after it is ready for play.
  - Failing to remove an injured player for whose benefit an excess time-out has been granted.
  - Deliberately advancing the ball after it has been declared dead.
- b. **Diving:** a defensive or offensive player may dive to catch a pass, however, diving is illegal when used to down a player or advance a ball. A player cannot dive in an attempt to gain extra yardage. The team will be penalized accordingly.
- c. **Down Field Blocking:** A basketball style (non-moving) screen is the only acceptable form of downfield blocking. The blocker may not run between a rusher and ball carrier impeding a defender's progress to the flag. Nor is a blocker allowed to run along the ball carrier preventing the defender an opportunity to pull the flag. This also constitutes flag-guarding.
- d. **Eligible Receiver:** All offensive players are eligible to receive a pass.
- e. **False Start:** No member of the offensive team may simulate the start of the play before the ball is snapped.
- f. **Handing the Ball:** Handing the ball is transferring player possession from one teammate to another without throwing or kicking it. A ball carrier may hand the ball backward at any time. No forward hand-offs are allowed. (Illegal pass)
- g. **Hurdling:** Jumping over or attempting to jump over a player, by the ball carrier, to prevent from being downed or to gain additional yardage is illegal. (Note: Jumping over a player who is on the ground to avoid injury, by official's judgment is legal.)

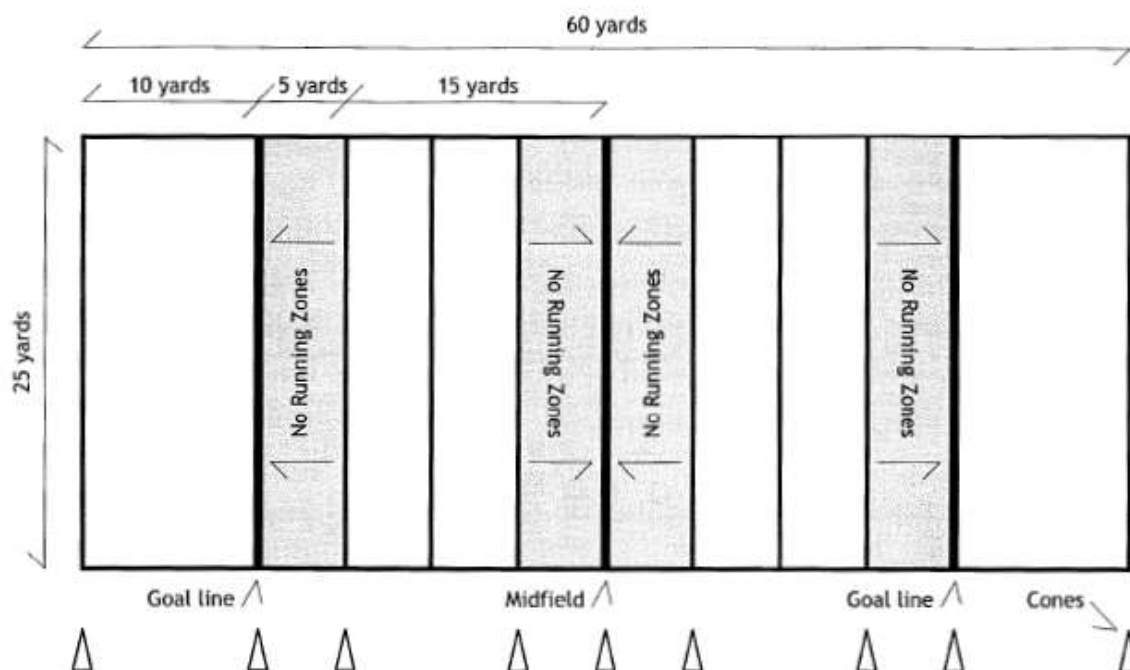
- h. **Inadvertent Whistle:** In case of an inadvertent whistle, the team in possession of the ball may choose to accept the result of the play at the point where the play was blown dead or choose to replay the down.
  - i. **Line of Scrimmage:** The line of scrimmage for each team is a vertical plane through the point of the ball nearest the team's goal line. Each player on a team must be on its side of the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped.
  - j. **Motion:** Only one player of the offensive team may be in motion at the snap. This player must be behind the quarterback and not moving toward its goal line at the time the ball is snapped. If the player comes to a stop he/she must be set for one second.
  - k. **Screen Blocking:** Legally obstructing an opponent without contacting him/her with any part of the screen blocker's body. The screen blocker shall have his/her arms fully extended to the ground (below the waist) either at his/her side, in front, or behind his/her back. Any use of arms, elbows, or legs to initiate contact during the screen block is illegal. A player must be on his/her feet before, during and after screen blocking. Screen blocking is the only form of legal blocking that can be used by any player at any time.
    - The screen blocker must give an opponent at least one step if opponent has his/her back to blocker.
    - The screen blocker must not initiate contact with opponent.
    - The screen blocker may not take a position so close to a moving opponent that this opponent cannot avoid contact by stopping or changing directions.
    - After the snap of the ball, a blocker may move laterally or backward two (2) steps.
- \*Note: If any of the above provisions are violated, and contact results, the screener has committed an illegal block.**
- l. **Shielding (Flag Guarding):** Runners shall not flag guard by using their hands, arms, or the ball to deny the opportunity for opponent to pull or remove their flag belt. This includes:
    - Swinging the hand or arm over the flag belt.
    - Stiff arms.
    - Placing the ball in possession over the flag belt.
    - Lowering the shoulders or arm over the flag belt.
  - m. **Shift:** A shift is the action of one (1) or more offensive players who after taking set positions move to a new position prior to the snap. A player who shifts must reset for one (1) second prior to the snap.
  - n. **Snap:** A snap is the legal act of passing the ball through the legs from the ground to the quarterback to start a play.
  - o. **Substitution:** Any player on the roster may enter upon the completion of a play (when the ball is dead). Each substitute must play at least one (1) down prior to being replaced. A replaced player must leave the field immediately.

## 17. Points of Emphasis:

- No team shall repeatedly commit fouls which halve the distance to the goal line.
- Neither team shall commit any act which, in the opinion of the referee, tends to make a travesty of the game. This includes intentionally committing fouls to gain an advantage.
- The referee will enforce any penalty he/she considers equitable, including the award of a score for an unfair act.

## Diagram of Flag Football Field

The playing field is ideally 60 yards long (including the end zones) and 25 yards wide. If insufficient space is available, a slightly smaller space can be used. A space of at least 5 yards around the field must be free and clear of obstructions. The field can be marked with chalk, paint and/or traffic cones.





## SECTION G- OFFICIALS AND THEIR DUTIES

Special Olympics Flag Football is officiated by at least 2 qualified officials (Referee and Linesman) who are assisted by a scorekeeper. (2-4 officials can be used)

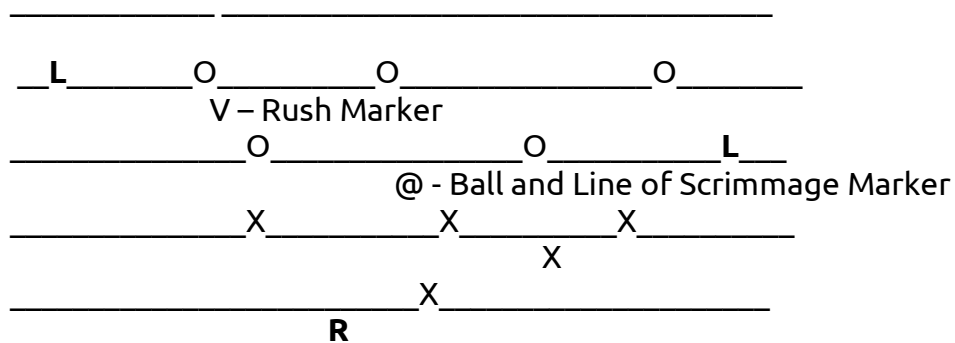
Primary duties of the Referee:

1. Pre-game meeting and coin toss
2. Spotting the ball (including placing the ball marker on the ground)
3. Ready for play/delay of game
4. Offensive team's pre-snap compliance with the rules
5. Runs to the line of scrimmage
6. Side of field opposite Linesman
7. General rules enforcement
8. Penalties
9. 6 second count after snap of ball

Primary duties of the Linesman:




























1. Official timer
2. Number of down
3. Ball marker 5 yards from line of scrimmage
4. "No running zones"
5. Defensive team's rules compliance (including pass rush violations)
6. Forward progress on runs or passes beyond line of scrimmage
7. Side of field opposite Referee
8. General rules enforcement

Positions of Officials at the Snap:



**R = Referee**      **L = Linesman**      X = Offense      O = Defense

# FLAG FOOTBALL SIGNALS

 <p>Ball ready for play</p>	 <p>Start clock</p>	 <p>Time-out Discretionary or injury time-out (follow by tapping hands on chest)</p>	 <p>First down</p>	 <p>Touchdown Field goal Point(s) after touchdown</p>
 <p>Safety</p>	 <p>Loss of down</p>	 <p>(Incomplete forward pass)</p>	 <p>Disregard flag</p>	 <p>Inadvertent whistle (Face Press Box)</p>
 <p>End of period</p>	 <p>Encroachment Offside defense</p>	 <p>Illegal procedure False start</p>	 <p>Illegal shift - 2 hands Illegal motion - 1 hand</p>	 <p>Delay of game</p>
 <p>Substitution infraction</p>	 <p>Illegal participation</p>	 <p>Failure to wear required equipment</p>	 <p>Forward pass interference</p>	 <p>Ineligible downfield on pass</p>
 <p>Intentional grounding</p>	 <p>Personal foul</p>	 <p>Illegal pass Illegal forward handing</p>	 <p>Illegal use of hands or arms</p>	 <p>Holding/obstructing</p>
 <p>Unsportsmanlike conduct Noncontact foul</p>		 <p>Player disqualification</p>		

## SECTION H - COACHES AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Coaches and managers are responsible for dressing according to SOKY standards. Not only are athletes required to look their best, but coaches and team managers hold this responsibility as well. **This includes athletes who are managers.**
  - a. Coaches and managers **MUST** wear a matching coach's shirt. This shirt must be the same color of the team's uniforms OR can be another color that represents the team, as long as it sports the team name. If a coach's or manager's shirt does not bare the team name, then it must be the predominant color of the team's uniform.
  - b. Jeans can be worn, as long as they have **NO holes** and they fit properly.
  - c. Athletic suits can be worn, but absolutely **NO sweatpants!** (cotton-type)
  - d. Shoes must be worn. **NO flip-flops** or sandals allowed (NO open-toed shoes).
  - e. Cell phones or any other electronic devices will no longer be allowed on the bench or sidelines. Cell phones should be turned off. The only exception will be for a coach who may be on call for emergency reasons.
2. Coaches are responsible for knowing and understanding the rules of the game provided in this manual. Coaches are also responsible for making sure that all uniforms and equipment meet SOKY standards, and that all game equipment (mouth-pieces, belts, etc.) are brought to every game/tournament.
3. Coaches should use the proper equipment and teach the athletes to use and perform all activities the "right" way the first time and every time. For safety's sake, coaches should keep the instructional and playing areas clear of clutter and debris. Coaches should be aware of equipment problems and hazardous areas so as to correct or avoid them. In addition, coaches should perform periodic safety inspections and preventative maintenance on all equipment and playing field areas.

***Fair athletic competition creates an opportunity for each athlete or team to play at his/her best. You are strongly encouraged to place athletes on teams where all members have an equal chance to perform as contributing team members. An athlete should never be placed on a team where he/she is only a position and not a contributor. The best coach strives to create a team that practices, plays and contributes as a whole. The team will always be stronger than any one player.***

Bench credentials will be limited to THREE per team. These are limited to coaches, assistant coaches, and managers. No one under the age of sixteen (16) will be allowed under any circumstance to be seated on the team bench or on the field, unless he/she is an athlete. Managers who are Special Olympics Athletes need to be listed on the roster and have a valid Special Olympics medical on file. However, no bench credential is needed.

Coaches should understand that there will always be the strongest and weakest teams in each division. If at any time a coach is not being sensitive to a lopsided score, a Tournament Official will approach that coach during a timeout to administer a warning. If a coach does not make appropriate substitutions or if the coach purposely continues to run up a score, Tournament Officials will impose disciplinary action to the coach. Depending on the severity of his/her actions a coach may be verbally reprimanded, not allowed to coach the next game OR be removed from coaching in the SOKY program altogether.

**COACHES WILL BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE  
TO THE SPECIAL OLYMPICS KENTUCKY  
COACHES CODE OF CONDUCT.**

# FLAG FOOTBALL ROSTER



Team Name \_\_\_\_\_

Head Coach \_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (cell) \_\_\_\_\_ (home) \_\_\_\_\_ (work) \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Team's Division:       2A       1A       B

A separate roster form is required for each team.

The minimum roster size is five (5) athletes and the maximum roster size is fifteen (15) athletes.

**\*PLEASE USE THE EXACT NAME THAT IS LISTED ON THE ATHLETES' MEDICAL FORM\***

	Athlete's Name (Last, first name)	Date of Birth	Current Medical on File?
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			

## FLAG FOOTBALL ROSTER (cont'd)

Bench credentials will be limited to **THREE** per team (coaches and team managers).

Assistant Coaches and Chaperones must be 16 years of age or older. No one under the age of 16 will be allowed to sit on the bench (with the exception of the athletes themselves).

Please fill out ALL information for Coaches and Team Managers. If an athlete is a team manager, please denote with an "\*".

Name (first & last name)	Address	DOB
Head Coach		
Assistant Coach		
Assistant Coach		

**These 3 individuals will receive bench credentials.**

Name (first & last name)	DOB	Current Medical on File?
Athlete Team Managers		
Athlete Team Managers		

**These athlete managers do not need bench credentials, but do need valid medicals.  
Please use the exact names listed on the athletes' medical forms.**

If you wish to register additional people who help with your team do so here. Please note that these are additional chaperones, bus drivers, etc. and will **NOT** receive bench credentials. These individuals still need to be an approved volunteer within the SOKY Program.

Additional Personnel	Address	DOB
Additional Personnel	Address	DOB
Additional Personnel	Address	DOB

**Special Olympics Kentucky  
ATTN: Flag Football  
105 Lakeview Court  
Frankfort, KY 40601  
FAX: 502/695-0496**

## Prepare for the Unexpected!!

10 Questions to ask yourself:

1. Are you and your assistants aware of athletes' pre-existing medical problems, such as diabetes, epilepsy, or allergic reactions?
2. Do you and your assistants have ready access to the Athlete Parent release forms, which give permission for medical treatment in case of emergency?
3. Do you have a well-stocked first-aid kit on hand at the training sessions and competitions?
4. Have you instructed your assistants on how to use materials in the first-aid kit?
5. Do you know the location of the nearest telephone to call 911?
6. Have you developed an emergency plan in the case of an accident?
7. Will paramedics have easy access to your training facility? Will they run into locked gates, doors, or anything else that could impede their progress?
8. Do you know where the nearest hospital is located?
9. Do you have a list of the names and phone numbers of the parents or group home providers to call in the event of serious injury?
10. Do you know how to stay calm and in control of yourself?

# Recommended Procedure for Avoiding Heat Injury/Illness through Analysis of Heat Index and Restructuring of Activities for Special Olympics Kentucky

Special Olympics' practices, competitions, and activities are often conducted outdoors. Heat problems often occur when athletes play too long and hard, and stay in the sun too long. Heat index calculations should be used to determine the appropriate precautions that should be taken to ensure athlete health and safety.

## **Heat Index:**

A measurement of the air temperature in relation to the relative humidity, used as an indicator of the perceived temperature (how hot it actually feels.)

Problems that may arise as a result of high heat index levels include, but are not limited to, heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke.

## **Heat Cramps:**

Painful cramps involving abdominal muscles and extremities cause by intense, prolonged exercise in the heat and depletion of salt and water due to profuse sweating. Symptoms include muscular pains and spasms, usually in the legs or abdomen.

## **Heat Exhaustion:**

A condition characterized by faintness, rapid pulse, nausea, profuse sweating, cool skin, and collapse, caused by prolonged exposure to heat accompanied by loss of adequate fluid and salt from the body.

## **Heat Stroke:**

A disturbance of the temperature-regulating mechanisms of the body caused by overexposure to excessive heat, resulting in fever, hot and dry skin, and rapid pulse, sometimes progressing to delirium and coma.

## **Coach Responsibility:**

Coaches must play an active role to ensure their athletes are prepared for and protected from the weather. All athletes should consume plenty of water to ensure hydration well before exposure to the heat and each athlete should be provided with individual water bottles. If necessary, it is the coach's duty to find shade for their team, provide cold towels, etc. **Providing these things is not the responsibility of the Tournament Officials.**

**The following heat index scale should be used to determine appropriate participation procedures. This recommended procedure should be used until such time as the temperature is below 80 degrees as no combination of heat and humidity at that level will result in a need to limit activity.**

\*Any time restructuring of an activity is necessary the heat index should be re-checked every 30 minutes to ensure there has not been an increase.



# Heat Index Procedure

## Under 95 degree

- Provide ample amounts of water.
- Must take water breaks.
- Ice-down towels for cooling.
- Watch/monitor athletes carefully.

## 95 degrees to 99 degrees

- Provide ample amounts of water.
- Must take water breaks.
- Ice-down towels for cooling.
- Watch/monitor athletes carefully.
- Alter uniform by removing items if possible.
- Reduce time of outside activity.
- Consider postponing practice to later in the day.

## 100 degrees to 102 degrees

- Provide ample amounts of water.
- Must take water breaks.
- Ice-down towels for cooling.
- Watch/monitor athletes carefully.
- Alter uniform by removing items if possible.
- Allow for changes to dry t-shirts and shorts.
- Reduce time of outside activity as well as indoor activity if air conditioning is unavailable.
- Postpone activity to later in the day.

## Above 102 degrees

- Stop all outside activity and stop all inside activity if air conditioning is unavailable. Best efforts will be made to reschedule.