

FLAG FOOTBALL

MODIFIED EVENTS

Individual Skills Competition

TRADITIONAL EVENTS

Traditional Team

UNIFIED EVENTS

Unified Team

The Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Flag Football shall govern all Special Olympics competitions. Special Olympics has created these rules based upon National Football League's Air It Out Flag Football rules, which shall be employed except when they are in conflict with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Flag Football or Article I. In such cases, the [Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Flag Football](#) shall apply.

COMPETITION MANAGEMENT

TEAMS & LEVELS

1. The team roster may contain a maximum of 10 players.
2. Teams shall field five (5) players to start the game (required).
 - a. Teams may continue with a minimum of four (4) players, if necessary due to disqualification or injury.
3. Team Level: Each team shall be placed in one (1) of three (3) Levels for play, based on attributes that best characterize their team. The level is subject to change by the Flag Football Sport Management Team prior to the tournament. A team's Level will serve as the basis for division placement.
 - a. Level 1 - High: plays by regulation rules; high to excellent skills and athleticism; implements strategies; 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.
 - b. Level 2 - Average: plays by regulation rules; average skills and athleticism; some strategy; 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.
 - c. Level 3 - Low: following rules is a challenge; low skills and athleticism; little strategy; 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.
4. When Special Olympics athletes or Unified Sports® partners require the use of wheelchairs or other mobility assistance devices, participation in team sports (basketball, softball, volleyball, and flag football) likely creates undue health and safety risks for that athlete and others in the game. The County Coordinator may apply to the State Office for special consideration for athletes who require such assistance. These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Athletes in question should not compete at any level without State Office approval.
5. Each team shall have an adult non-playing coach responsible for the line-up and conduct of the team during competition.
6. The Head Coach of each Flag Football team must have been certified by attending a Special Olympics Flag Football Coaches Training School. If a program has more than one team, each team must have a separate certified coach.

DIVISIONING

1. For Team sports a divisioning process will be used.
 - a. Sport Management teams along with SOIN staff work together to create these divisions.
 - b. The intent of divisioning is to provide competitive competition using a combination of age, gender, game records, and ability to create divisions of equal ability for quality competition. When able, program location and travel time will also be considered when creating different brackets and schedules.
2. Teams will be grouped in divisions based on classification round of game or minimum game requirement and submitted game records.

SPORT RULES

UNIFORM SPECIFICATIONS

1. All participants must have a playing uniform consisting of matching shirts with numbers on front and back which can be tucked in at the waist.
2. Athletic short or pant without pockets
3. No jewelry maybe worn (rings, bracelets, necklaces, earrings, etc.)
4. No blue jeans or ball caps will be allowed. Sunglasses must be pliable
5. Players must wear rubber-cleated or flat-soled athletic shoes.
 - a. Metal cleats, spikes, hiking boots or other equipment deemed dangerous by officials will not be allowed.



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EQUIPMENT

1. Teams shall play with a pebble grained leather or rubber covered ball in regular or intermediate/youth size.
2. A protective mouthpiece must be worn at all times.
3. A one-piece, three-flag belt will be worn during the game.

GENERAL RULES

1. Special Olympics Flag Football is non-contact.
 - a. In all aspects of Special Olympics flag football, rulings shall be made with player safety as the primary consideration.
2. Each Team shall have an adult non-playing coach responsible for the line-up and conduct of the team during competition.
3. Points of Emphasis
 - a. No team shall repeatedly commit fouls which halve the distance to the goal line.
 - b. 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.
 - c. The referee will enforce any penalty they consider equitable, including the award of a score for an unfair act.
 - d. Referee may pull the flags of offensive players after a scoring play to verify they are attached legally.
4. Scoring
 - a. Touchdown: six (6) points.
 - b. Extra Point: one (1) point from the 6-yard line, two (2) points from the 12-yard line.
 - c. Safety: two (2) points.
 - d. Mercy Rule: If a team is up twenty-five (25) or points in the last minute of the game, the clock will continue to run.
5. Timing
 - a. The game shall consist of two (2) 20-minute halves (running time).
 - b. During the last one (1) minute of each half, the clock:
 - i. Stops for incomplete passes, scoring plays, changes of possession, out of bounds, or first downs.
 - ii. Restarts on the snap
 - iii. Does not start for the extra point attempts (untimed down)
 - c. There shall be a five (5) minute break at halftime.
 - d. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion (injuries, delays).
 - e. Delay of game will be called if the ball is not put in play promptly and legally or for any action or lack of action by either team that tends to prevent play.
 - i. Consuming more than 30 - seconds to snap the ball after it is ready for play
 - ii. Interrupting the 30-second county for any reason except for a granted time out.
 - iii. Failing to remove an injured player who the game clock was stopped for.
 - iv. Deliberately advancing the ball after it has been declared dead.
 - v. Each team receives two (2) 60-second timeout per game.
6. Overtime
 - a. Occurs if the score is tied at the end of regulation play.
 - b. All regulation rules and penalties are in effect during overtime.
 - c. There are no time-outs.
 - d. A coin toss is held to determine the first possession (called by the home team).
 - e. Each team received two (2) downs beginning midfield to score or gain the most yards.
 - i. If the team with the first attempt in overtime scores on the first play, the opposing team must score on its first play also. There are no attempts at extra points in overtime.
 - ii. If both teams score a touchdown, or gain the same yardage, the procedure is repeated until one (1) team wins.
 - f. The team gaining the most points or gaining the most yards is awarded one (1) extra point to the tied score and wins the game.
 - g. Exceptions to this rule are as follows:
 - i. Interception: The team that intercepts the pass, automatically wins the game.
7. The Snap
 - a. The ball may be snapped between the center's legs or to the side.
 - i. The snapper's fee must be behind the line of scrimmage.



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- ii. The snapper shall transfer the ball from its position on the ground in a continuous motion to the quarterback to legally start a play
 - b. No member of the offensive team may simulate the start of the play before the ball is snapped (delay of game).
 8. Rushing the Quarterback
 - a. All defensive players who rush the Quarterback must be a minimum of 7-yards from the line of scrimmage at the time of the snap.
 - i. A special marker, placed by the official, will designate the spot 5-yards from the line of scrimmage.
 - ii. If a rusher crosses the rush line early (within 7 yards from the line of scrimmage at snap), they may return to the rush line, reset and then legally rush the quarterback.
 - b. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend the line of scrimmage.
 - c. Once the Quarterback hands off the ball, the 7-yard zone no longer exists, and all defenders are eligible to rush.
 9. Running
 - a. The Quarterback (player receiving the snap) CANNOT run the ball.
 - b. Only direct hand-offs behind the line of scrimmage are legal. Laterals or pitches of any kind are not allowed.
 - c. The player who takes a hand-off can pass the ball, as long as they do not pass the line of scrimmage.
 - d. "No Running Zones" are on or inside the 5-yards before the mid-field line and goal line.
 - i. Any ball snapped from these zones must be passed.
 - ii. The purpose of "No Running Zones" is to avoid short yardage power running situations.
 - e. The ball carrier may not dive, hurdle, or use either arm to shield a defender from grasping their flag.
 - f. Ball carrier must make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position (cannot knock down).
 - g. The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's belt is when the flag is pulled.
 10. Passing and Receiving
 - a. All passes must be forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage
 - i. Backwards passes (laterals or pitches) are illegal regardless of field location.
 - b. Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
 - c. All players are eligible to receive a forward pass, including the Quarterback following a legal handoff.
 - d. If a player steps out of bounds, they may not be the first player to touch the ball.
 - e. Only one (1) offensive player is allowed but may not be moving toward the line of scrimmage at the snap.
 - f. A player must have at least one (1) foot in bounds when making a catch.
 - g. Interceptions may be returned for positive yards by the intercepting player.

SUPPLEMENT TO THE RULES

1. Flag Pulling
 - a. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball.
 - b. A flag is considered pulled when the clip is no longer attached to the opposite side of the belt.
 - c. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off a player who is not in possession of the ball (penalty).
 - d. It is illegal to pull or strip the ball from the carrier's possession at any time (penalty).
 - e. If a player's flag belt inadvertently falls off during the play, the player is down immediately upon possession of the ball and the play ends.
 - f. Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball carrier to obstruct the defense's access to the flags through contact by stiff arming, dropping the head or shoulder, or intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey.
 - i. The ball carrier may not dive, hurdle, stiff arm, or use either arm in an attempt to shield a defender from grasping their flag.
 - ii. Contact must occur for a flag guarding penalty to be called. Defenders may not dive in an attempt to pull flags. (illegal procedure)
 - g. Defenders may not dive in an attempt to pull flags (illegal procedure).
2. Diving
 - a. A defensive or offensive player may dive to catch a pass.
 - b. Diving is illegal when used to down a player or advance a ball.
 - c. A player cannot dive in an attempt to gain extra yardage.
 - d. The team will be penalized accordingly.



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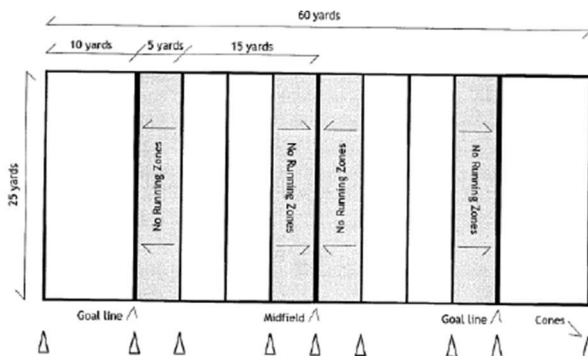
- e. Jumping over or attempting to jump over a player, by the ball carrier, to prevent from being downed or to gain additional yardage is illegal.
 - i. Note: Jumping over a player who is on the ground to avoid injury, by official's judgment, is legal.
 - ii. If the player comes to a stop they must be set for one (1) second.
- 3. Screen Blocking
 - a. Legally obstructing an opponent without contacting him/her with any part of the screen blocker's body.
 - b. The screen blocker shall have their arms fully extended to the ground (below the waist) either at their side, in front, or behind their back. Arms may also be crossed over the chest with hands near the shoulders.
 - c. Any use of arms, elbows, or legs to initiate contact during the screen block is illegal.
 - d. A player must be on their feet before, during, and after screen blocking.
 - e. Screen blocking is the only form of legal blocking that can be used by any player at any time.
 - f. Backend blocking (behind the line of scrimmage)
 - i. If any of the provisions listed are violated, and contact results, the screener has committed an illegal block.
 - ii. The screen blocker must give an opponent at least one (1) step.
 - iii. The screen blocker must not initiate contact with opponent.
 - iv. 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.
 - v. After assuming a legal blocking position, a player may move to maintain it, unless they move into an opponent and create contact.
 - g. Downfield Blocking
 - i. A basketball style (non-moving) screen is the only acceptable form of downfield blocking
 - ii. The blocker may not run between a defender and ball carrier in a manner that impedes a defender's progress to the flag.

EQUIPMENT

1. An intermediate (youth) size football will be used in all divisions.
2. A protective mouthpiece must be worn at all times.
3. A one-piece three-flag belt will be worn during the game

STANDARD RULES FOR UNIFIED SPORTS® TEAM

1. The roster shall contain a proportionate number of athletes and Unified partners.
2. During competition, the line-up shall never exceed three (3) athletes and two (2) Unified partners at any time.
3. Failure to adhere to the required ratio results in a forfeit.
4. Each team shall have an adult non-playing coach responsible for the line-up and conduct of the team during competition.
5. Unified Sports: a handoff can occur between any combination of players behind the line of scrimmage.
 - a. Combinations include athlete-to-partner, partner-to-athlete, athlete-to-athlete, partner-to-partner passes.
6. Unified Sports exceptions: if a partner throws a pass, only athletes are eligible receivers. No partner-to-partner passes.
 - a. Unified Sports teams are expected to comply with this rule without intervention by officials.
 - i. Coaches or designated captains should report a violation to the official immediately.
 - ii. Failure to self-patrol will be considered unsporting and will be penalized accordingly.



Game Field with No Run zones marked.



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STANDARD RULES FOR INDIVIDUAL SKILLS COMPETITION

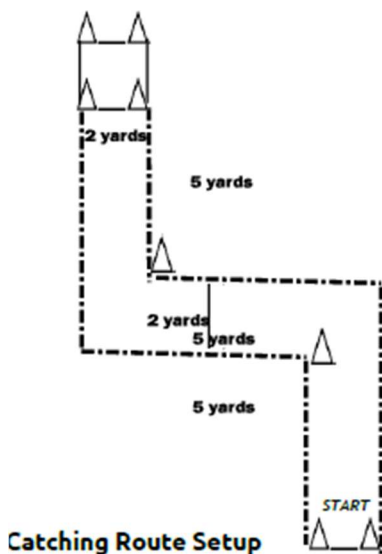
1. The Individual Skills Competition is a competition designed for lower ability athletes.
2. It is not for athletes who can already play the game.
3. The Individual Skills Competition is composed of four (4) events: Catching, Throwing for Accuracy, Throwing for Distance, and Flag Pulling.
4. The athlete's final score is determined by adding together the scores from these four (4) events.
5. The field size is 20-yards x 20-yards.
6. Catching
 - a. Purpose
 - i. To measure the athlete's ability to run a route and catch a football.
 - b. Equipment
 - i. Eight (8) traffic cones and two (2) footballs
 - c. Description
 - i. The athlete will run a chair route marked by cones.
 - ii. Each athlete starts at the starting point marked by two (2) cones then run to the first cone placed five (5) yards out, turn left and run five (5) additional yards to the next cone, then turn right, and run five (5) more yards to the square of cones and end up in a box 1-yard x 1-yard; the athlete will turn around and catch a thrown footballs
 - iii. Each athlete will complete the whole activity three (3) times.
 - d. Scoring
 - i. The athlete receives five (5) points for catching the ball; two (2) points for blocking or touching (knocking down the ball); zero (0) points for a missed attempt.
 - ii. For each cone on the running route the athlete successfully runs they will receive one (1) point.
 - iii. A total of 21 points are possible at this station (7 points total per attempt).
7. Throwing for Accuracy
 - a. Purpose
 - i. To measure the athlete's ability to throw a football accurately.
 - b. Equipment
 - i. Two (2) traffic cones, three (3) Hoola Hoops, five (5) footballs
 - c. Description
 - i. The player stands behind the restraining line in a 1-yard x 1-yard box, entering and existing from the back of the box.
 - ii. Three (3) targets are placed strategically on field; one (1) hoop at 2-yards, 5-yards, and 10-yards away from the restraining line.
 - iii. The athlete will stand in the square and try to throw the football into any of the targets (hoola hoops).
 - iv. Each athlete receives three (3) trials, one (1) trial at each distance. There are five (5) attempts per trial, for a maximum of 30 points possible.
 - d. Scoring
 - i. Each target has its own point value.
 - 1) The 10-yard target is worth three (3) points.
 - 2) The 5-yard target is worth two (2) points.
 - 3) The 2-yard target is worth one (1) point.
 - 4) Zero (0) points for missing target.
8. Throwing for Distance
 - a. Purpose
 - i. To measure the athlete's ability in throwing a football for distance.
 - b. Equipment
 - i. Two (2) traffic cones, five (5) footballs, long measuring tape
 - c. Description
 - i. The player stands behind the restraining line, back far enough to take one (1) or more steps in preparation for throwing.
 - ii. The player has five (5) attempts to throw the football as far as possible, without stepping over the restraining line.
 - iii. Coaches, assistants or other waiting players should be positioned in the field to indicate, using a cone or marking stake, the spot where each ball first touches the ground.
 - iv. The best of five (5) throws is measured and recorded as the player's score.



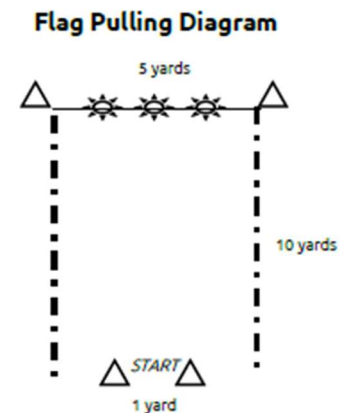
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- v. If a player steps on or over the line before releasing the football, the attempt must be repeated.
- vi. There will be a maximum of two (2) repeats.
- d. Scoring
 - i. The net throwing score equals the throwing distance measured at the point the ball hits the ground.
 - ii. The player's score is the best of the five (5) throws.
- 9. Flag Pulling
 - a. Purpose
 - i. To measure the athlete's flag pulling ability.
 - b. Equipment
 - i. Eight (8) traffic cones, three (3) flag belts with flags, one (1) stopwatch and three (3) volunteers
 - c. Description
 - i. There will be three (3) volunteers with flags on, standing 10-yards from the starting line marked by cones.
 - ii. The athlete will run out and pull a flag off the first volunteer, then will return to the starting line and drop the flag in box.
 - iii. The athlete will repeat this two (2) more times until all flags are pulled and dropped in the box at the starting line.
 - d. Scoring
 - i. This event will be scored by time. Listed below is the score being used.



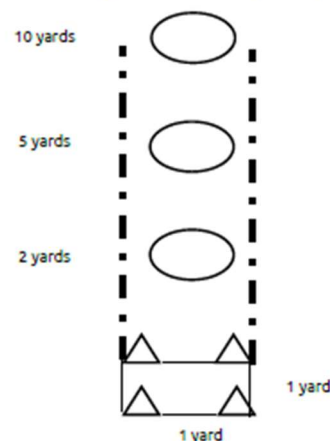
Conversion Chart	
10 - 15 seconds	20 points
16 - 20 seconds	18 points
21 - 25 seconds	16 points
26 - 30 seconds	14 points
31 - 35 seconds	12 points
36 - 40 seconds	10 points
41 - 45 seconds	8 points
46 - 50 seconds	6 points
51 - 55 seconds	4 points
56 and up	2 points



Throwing for Distance Diagram



Throwing for Accuracy Diagram



FLAG FOOTBALL Individual Skills Scorecard

Athlete's Name: _____

County Program: _____



Event Attempts	Scoring System	Points	Score																								
Catching <i>3 trials</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 point for each cone on route 1 point for getting into box to catch 0 points for a missed attempt at catching 2 points for blocking/touching ball 5 points for catching ball 	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Cone</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>Catch</td> <td>Sub-total</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>1)</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>___</td> <td>=</td> <td>___</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2)</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>___</td> <td>=</td> <td>___</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3)</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>___</td> <td>=</td> <td>___</td> </tr> </table>	Cone	1	2	Catch	Sub-total		1)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	___	=	___	2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	___	=	___	3)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	___	=	___	<p><i>Sum of 3 trials</i></p> <p>_____</p> <p>points</p>
Cone	1	2	Catch	Sub-total																							
1)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	___	=	___																						
2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	___	=	___																						
3)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	___	=	___																						
Throwing for Accuracy <i>3 trials</i> <i>15 attempts</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 point for target #1 2 points for target #2 3 points for target #3 0 points for a missed attempt 	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Target #1:</td> <td>Target #2:</td> <td>Target #3:</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>1) ___</td> <td>1) ___</td> <td>1) ___</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2) ___</td> <td>2) ___</td> <td>2) ___</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>3) ___</td> <td>3) ___</td> <td>3) ___</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>4) ___</td> <td>4) ___</td> <td>4) ___</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>5) ___</td> <td>5) ___</td> <td>5) ___</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Target #1:	Target #2:	Target #3:		1) ___	1) ___	1) ___		2) ___	2) ___	2) ___		3) ___	3) ___	3) ___		4) ___	4) ___	4) ___		5) ___	5) ___	5) ___		<p><i>Sum of 3 trials (15 attempts):</i></p> <p>_____</p> <p>points</p>
Target #1:	Target #2:	Target #3:																									
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3) ___	3) ___	3) ___																									
4) ___	4) ___	4) ___																									
5) ___	5) ___	5) ___																									
Throwing for Distance <i>5 attempts</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 point for each yard the ball travels in the air from the boundary line 	<p>Attempt #:</p> <p>1) _____</p> <p>2) _____</p> <p>3) _____</p> <p>4) _____</p> <p>5) _____</p>	<p><i>The best 1 of 5 attempts:</i></p> <p>_____</p> <p>points</p>																								
Flag Pulling <i>2 attempts</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time to run 10 yards pull flag and bring flag back to start line <p>Conversion Chart</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>10-15 sec = 20 points</td> <td>36-40 sec = 10 points</td> </tr> <tr> <td>16-20 sec = 18 points</td> <td>41-45 sec = 8 points</td> </tr> <tr> <td>21-25 sec = 16 points</td> <td>46-50 sec = 6 points</td> </tr> <tr> <td>26-30 sec = 14 points</td> <td>51-55 sec = 4 points</td> </tr> <tr> <td>31-35 sec = 12 points</td> <td>56 and up = 2 points</td> </tr> </table>	10-15 sec = 20 points	36-40 sec = 10 points	16-20 sec = 18 points	41-45 sec = 8 points	21-25 sec = 16 points	46-50 sec = 6 points	26-30 sec = 14 points	51-55 sec = 4 points	31-35 sec = 12 points	56 and up = 2 points	<p>Attempt #:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td><i>Time (sec)</i></td> <td><i>Total Points</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>1) _____</td> <td>_____</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2) _____</td> <td>_____</td> </tr> </table>	<i>Time (sec)</i>	<i>Total Points</i>	1) _____	_____	2) _____	_____	<p><i>Best of 2 attempts:</i></p> <p>_____</p> <p>points</p>								
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1) _____	_____																										
2) _____	_____																										

NOTE

Do NOT submit this form as the entry form. Use this form for entry score calculation only.

Place the TOTAL SCORE as the entry score.

TOTAL SCORE
