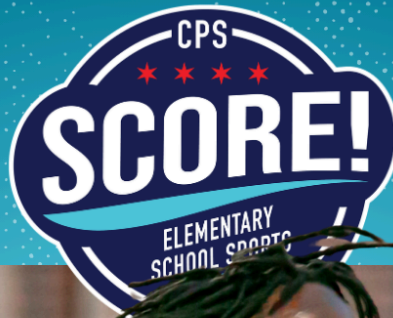


Flag Football Manual



SY26

Flag Football Terms and Conditions 5th-8th Grade Girls & Boys

Welcome!

The Office of Sports Administration (OSA) is excited to welcome you to another season of CPS SCORE!

Please review the included Terms and Conditions document for key program information and requirements.

Non-compliance with any of the following information may result in the forfeiture of coaches' season stipend.

Any and all questions can be directed to the Athletic Program Administrator (APA) or Commissioner of your Network.

Thank you for your support of our student-athletes and programs across the District!

Contact Information

A CPS Elementary Athletic Program Administrator (APA) is assigned to assist each of the 13 networks across the District. Please send any general questions regarding this document or the CPS SCORE! Program to sportsad@cps.edu or contact the Office of Sports Administration at 773-534-0700.

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Sportsmanship Statement & Guidelines

The Chicago Public League asks all of its students, officials, coaches, spectators and school staff to promote sportsmanship before, during and after every game. Offensive language including profanity and/or derogatory or intimidating remarks of any kind directed at officials, event staff, student-athletes, coaches or team representatives will not be tolerated. In order for sportsmanship to prevail, all coaches, students, staff, and spectators must display respect and civility in an effort to enthusiastically support our student-athletes to create a safe and inclusive environment.

[Click Here For Full Sportsmanship Policy](#)

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Points Of Emphasis

Prior to the start of each season, the Office of Sports Administration will prepare a form to collect anticipated/interest sports for each school.

This interest form will generate a spreadsheet based on teams interested in participating that season. Any team that does NOT complete an interest form/submit a principal/asst principal signed Aspen Roster by the communicated deadlines, are subject to non approval and may not be included in the league schedule.

Non-compliance with any of the following may result in a coach/liaison delay or forfeiture of their athletic stipend. Any of the following may also require the school to have a supervisory conference with OSA.

- Students, Officials, Coaches, Spectators and School Staff are expected to promote **sportsmanship**. Any unsportsmanlike behavior may result in immediate removal from the property, and further investigation may result in the potential suspension of SCORE! program at your school.
- Teams that opt-in are expected to participate in the program in its entirety. Teams that drop out will be subject to further consequences. More details can be found in the Forfeits and Penalties section. See Page 7 for details.
- All participating teams that have met roster minimums are required to upload rosters to Aspen, complete the Coaches Directory, complete column "D" of the Attestation Form, and upload this information into the correct school folder located in the Google Classroom, by the communicated deadlines. Updated, signed rosters by the principal, must be turned in to the designated cps admin weekly.
- **A certified coach may receive up to four stipends each athletic season (fall, winter, spring) maximum of twelve for the entire SY26.** *Please see payment criteria breakdown for more details.

Mandatory Certification- Sports Liaisons must keep certificates in a file pending OSA audit and can be found under the Extra Training Tab in [SafeSchools](#).

- PCA Workshop Completion - Separate Training Outside Of Safe Schools
- Concussion Training *required every 2 years - Athletics Sub Tab In Safe Schools
- CPR/AED Training - Health Sub Tab in Safe Schools

[School Roster Upload Folder](#)
| [Athletic.net](#) | [Aspen Guide](#)

Media / Social Media Expectations

The Chicago Public League (CPL) is proud to offer in-depth coverage of all of our student-athletes across each sports season. In order to continue to tell these stories, the CPL Sports Communications team asks the following of all participating coaches and student-athletes:

- Ensure all student media consent forms are signed via the standard CPS enrollment packet.
- Make coaches / players available as requested for pre and post game interviews.
- Share accomplishments and milestones with the CPS Sports Communications Team so they can highlight your school.
- Interact and follow all CPL athletics content via our website CPSAthletics.com or via Twitter [@CPLAthletcs](https://twitter.com/CPLAthletcs).

CPS Sports Communications Team:

Communications Manager - Joey Gelman - jdgelman@cps.edu
Communications Specialist - Michael Wojtychiw - mmwojtichiw@cps.edu

Forfeits, No Contest, Penalties

*All reasonable efforts should be made to avoid a team forfeit

- If a team is not present for a contest, OR is not ready to play within **10** minutes of the assigned start time, the Office of Sports Administration may record the contest as a forfeit.
- **Two forfeits** will result in your school being dropped from the remaining schedule and the coach may NOT be paid.
- A **No Contest** result is considered a game not completed due to extenuating circumstances, not to include postponements or cancellations initiated by the Office of Sports Administration.
 - No Contest Results: A game that is neither won nor lost

Forfeit criteria definition(s)

- Violating any student or coach eligibility/roster rules according to terms and conditions
- Not meeting the minimum number of student athletes to participate in competition days as defined per sport
- More than 10 minutes late to a contest without communication or no shows
- Failure to participate in required meets/competitions ran by OSA

The [Stipend Criteria by Sport](#) is a sheet that outlines standards that teams must meet in order for the coach to receive compensation. There are separate tabs for HS and SCORE!

Calendar

CPS Calendar - Regular Season Information

Opt-in/Aspen Registration Open	Feb 2, 2026
Opt-in Closed (deadline)	Feb 27, 2026
First Official Practice	Feb 23, 2026
Aspen Roster/Coaches Directory/Pre-Attestation Deadline	Feb 27, 2026
SCORE! 7th/8th Regular Season Competition Starts	Apr 4, 2026
SCORE! 7th/8th Regular Season Competition Ends	May 9, 2026
SCORE! 5th/6th Regular Season Competition Starts	Apr 18, 2026
SCORE! 5th/6th Regular Season Competition Ends	May 9, 2026

CPS Calendar - Post Season and Championship Information

SCORE! 7th/8th Playoffs Starts	May 11, 2026
SCORE! 7th/8th Playoffs City Championship	May 28, 2026

Coach Certification Statement

All individuals working in a coaching capacity must be formally hired as CPS Employees or CPS Level 1 Volunteers, as well as hold the following certification/training for the current year prior to coaching:

- Complete the SafeSchools Concussion Training
- Complete PCA Training Workshop
- Complete SafeSchools CPR/AED Training

League Terms and Conditions:

Section One: Forming A Team

This section identifies general program rules and requirements associated with the SCORE! Elementary School Sports Program. The rules and requirements contained in this section apply to all CPS SCORE! Elementary school sport offerings.

CPS SCORE!+

The CPS SCORE!+ program is the official interscholastic athletics league for 5th-8th graders. Students will participate in practices during the week and gameplay each Saturday at a select site, featuring other schools from within their network. Teams are broken up into respective grade level teams and leagues and will compete in a regular season, playoffs and CPS SCORE!+ City Championship. 15 players are eligible to be on the roster for Saturday games for indoor events and 20 players are eligible to be on the roster for outdoor events. Coaches may rotate players should they have 15+ / 20+ students in the program or CPS SCORE! intramural teams below. Schools may choose to participate in additional non-conference gameplay at their discretion.

CPS SCORE! IntraSchool Play (weekday games)

The CPS SCORE! Program follows a “no cut” policy. Accordingly, all eligible students who register to participate shall be permitted to participate assuming a sufficient number of students register to allow for the formation of a team at the students’ gender and grade level. If an elementary school has enough registered students to form multiple teams, said elementary school may participate in the CPS SCORE! program that will be held during the week. It is the school’s responsibility to provide a location/gym, coach, schedule games, and pay officials for all SCORE! competitions. You must share your competition and intramural schedule with the APA and Commissioner.

Participation Time

The CPS SCORE! Program strongly encourages that all student-athletes have an opportunity to participate during game competitions. Students who register to participate in a sport will be provided the opportunity to participate during both practices and games. Coaches are encouraged to provide each athlete with the opportunity to learn and compete in different positions during the practices and games.

Student-Athlete Eligibility

Students must satisfy several criteria to be eligible to participate in the CPS SCORE! Program. The student criteria is as follows:

- Age / Grade
 - CPS SCORE! Sports are for 5th, 6th, 7th, or 8th grade students **only**. Students must be registered at the school in which they are participating.
- **5/6th Grade Level**
 - All 5/6th grade students are eligible for CPS SCORE! Sports.
 - 5/6th grade students are not allowed to play up on the 7/8th grade level during the regular season and conference playoffs.
 - **EXCEPTION:** 6th graders are allowed to participate on both 5/6th grade level and the 7th/8th grade level.
 - Any student that starts the academic school year at the age of 13 has “aged out” of participating at the 5/6th grade level and **must be enrolled and participate** on the 7/8th level.
 - If there are not enough 5/6th grade registrants at a particular school, this **does not** permit a school to allow 5th grade students to play up on the 7/8th grade level. **EXCEPTION:** 6th graders are allowed to participate on both 5/6th grade level and the 7th/8th grade level.
- **7/8th Grade Level**
 - Any student that starts the academic school year at the age of 15 has “aged out” of participating in CPS SCORE! Sports.
 - All current 7/8th grade students registered at the school in which they are participating.
 - All 7/8th grade students are prohibited from playing down on the 5/6th grade level.

NOTE: Schools violating any student-eligibility rules shall receive a forfeit for that game and all games in which the rules were violated (violation of the spirit of the rules may result in removal from playoffs per the discretion of OSA). Teams will be removed from the remainder of the schedule upon their 2nd forfeiture.

- School
 - Be a full-time student or registered as a homeschooled student at the registered CPS elementary school.
- Academic Standing
 - Be academically eligible based on their school’s eligibility standards.
NOTE: Each participating elementary school principal shall set academic eligibility standards for their school.
- Medical Requirement
 - According to school records, student-athletes must have approval by a physician to participate in physical education to participate in SCORE! sports.

Student Registration

- Participating elementary schools are responsible for registering participating students using the method(s) designated by the Office of Sports Administration:
 - Schools are required to submit students and coach registration information in ASPEN.
- Each participating school's final roster must be signed by the school principal and submitted to their assigned CPS Conference Commissioner prior to the start of the season. The liaison shall make team rosters available to the assigned coach(es).
- Each student registered in ASPEN to a sport/team MUST remain on that team roster for the remainder of that athletic sport season.

Team Rosters

- The sports liaison shall be solely responsible for the formation of team rosters.
- In order for a school team to be recognized for participation in SCORE!+ Conference league play, that school must field a team consisting of at least **nine (9) participants and a maximum of twenty (20) *Only 20 can dress on game day and rotate on Saturday competition at the discretion of the head coach.** ASPEN Rosters must be signed by the principal and submitted to the Office of Sports Administration prior to the start of each game
- **Score! Intraschool Play: Coaches must have more than (21) student-athletes participating to receive an additional SCORE! team.**
- Once all interested participants are entered in ASPEN and an Official Roster has been submitted, a coach may begin conditioning and practice. Conversely, if an Official Roster has not been submitted, students are not insured by the Chicago Public Schools insurance policy and coaches are not allowed to begin conditioning and practices until above stated requirements have been completed.
- Students must be added prior to the second game of the season
- The coach is responsible for bringing the most recent ASPEN team roster to each contest. The roster must be signed by the school principal. Any athlete whose name does not appear on the game day roster, is not permitted to participate.

NOTE: Schools violating any roster rules shall receive a forfeit for that game and all games in which the rules were violated. Teams will be removed from the remainder of the schedule upon their 2nd forfeiture.

Section Two: Program Regulations

Regular Season Dates

- No practices will be permitted before the official start date of each season or after the official end date of each season, as communicated by the Office of Sports Administration.
- The Office of Sports Administration will establish and communicate the girls and boys flag football season dates each year.
 - Each team will be scheduled to play a minimum of four (4) games.
 - Game times and opponents will be determined at random prior to the creation of the official schedule.
 - Note - It is the responsibility of the coach/school to read the schedule each week; if you miss a double-header game, you will be issued a forfeit.

Equipment:

- Flag Belts: (2 Flag) Pop flag football belts must be worn during all contests for the 7/8th grade league.
- Flag Belts: A three (3) flag football belt must be worn during all contests for the 5th/6th grade league.
- Players are encouraged to wear football cleats, **NO METAL SPIKES**. Gym shoes can be worn if the player does not own cleats. Eligible players without appropriate shoes **will not** be allowed to play (e.g. Dress or casual shoes)
- Mouth guards are encouraged, but not required
- Sportswear glasses/goggles are recommended to participate if you wear eyeglasses

Balls:

- All 5th/6th grade Co-Ed teams are allowed to use Junior Size Football (6)
- All 7th/8th grade girls and boys teams are allowed to use Youth/Intermediate Size (7)
 - Teams may play with their own football
 - Must be the correct size and approved by game officials before the start of the game
 - No nerf or rubber footballs are permitted

Uniforms:

- During scheduled flag football games, all team members are recommended to wear matching jerseys / t-shirts with numbers on the back and front.
Student-athletes can not wear non athletic bottoms (e.g they can not wear jeans, Khakis)

- Teams are permitted to wear school issued uniforms:
 - Each player is recommended to have an identical jersey top and similar bottoms
- Players are **not** allowed to wear jewelry. If religious or medical medals are worn, they shall be taped to the body under the uniform.
- Prohibited attire/accessories: Players are **not** allowed to wear earrings (may not be covered by band-aid); jewelry, head rags, hair jewelry (metal), and hoods.
 - **Per CPS, teams have to allow uniform modifications for the purpose of cultural value, religion and modesty preference.**
- IHSA Officials are responsible for enforcing these uniform rules.

Forfeits/No Contests

- All reasonable efforts should be made to avoid forfeits.
- If a team is not ready to compete at the scheduled time of the flag football game with all of their players present, the team will play the game as long as the minimum number of Six (6) players is present.

During the ten (10) minute grace period, only a CPS cleared staff member or volunteer can step in to serve as the coach (CPS ID Required). No parent or non-approved board volunteer can step in.

- In the absence of a CPS “cleared” coach, the school principal must submit the substitute’s information to our Office so that we can provide the clearance to the coach prior to game day.
- Should a team be delayed, they should contact their assigned CPS Network Commissioner and Opposing team Coach who will inform the Site Manager.
*coaches can be found on the SCORE! Master Directory
- A contest forfeiture will be treated as a loss in the season standings
- Student-Eligibility and team roster infractions are considered forfeitures and will count towards your total number of forfeits during the season.

Teams who forfeit two (2) games during a single sports season will be removed from participation for the remainder of the season.

Advanced Contest Cancellations

- The Office of Sports Administration will administer all advanced cancellations.
- All participating schools are responsible for developing a communication policy and procedures for all participants and their families regarding notifying them of a cancellation.
- Coaches, elementary school liaisons, conference commissioners, and/or principals may not cancel or reschedule games.
- Schools must notify the Office of Sports Administration by close of business (4:00pm) on the Thursday before that game for any school-sanctioned cancellations.

- Weather cancellations will be determined by the Office of Sports Administration and communicated to the Site Manager.

CPS SCORE!+ Playoff Format *2 forfeits your team will be dropped from the schedule

- The top 7/8th grade team from each site will qualify for the 13 Network SCORE! City Championship Tournament.
 - If there are multiple sites in a Network those teams will play each other for the Network Championship.
 - If there are multiple fields at 1 Site the top team from each field will play each other for the Network Championship or they will play to advance to the Network Championship because there are other sites in their Network.
 - A single forfeit may disrupt your seeding in tournament play
 - On the 7/8th grade level, the Network Champions from each network will advance to the SCORE! City Championship Tournament.
 - Seeding for the 7th/8th grade SCORE! City Championship Tournament will be a random draw.

Standings Tie Breakers

- Tiebreakers will be determined by the following:
 - Head to Head Match up records
 - Points allowed during all regular season contests
 - Points scored during all regular season contests (**Only if points allowed are equal**)
 - Coin flip (**Only if points allowed & points scored are equal**)

Contest Outcome Tracking & Reporting

- The Officials must complete and sign the contest score sheet provided by the Office of Sports Administration.
- Each coach must sign the scoresheet which indicates their agreement with the final score of the contest.
- The Site Manager is responsible for collecting and reporting all final contest scores to the Office of Sports Administration within 48 hours after the scheduled contest date.

Coaches Responsibilities

- Prior to the start of the sports season:
 - Attend the Coaches Meeting.
 - Provide proof that the Concussion Certification training has been completed within the last two (2) years. (Must be on file with the school principal/liaison).
 - Complete the Protecting Chicago Children training (PCC)
 - Complete the mandatory PCA training workshop(Positive Coaching Alliance)
 - Complete the KIPP training (highly recommended)
- During the course of the sport season

- o Prepare your student-athletes through daily practice sessions during the season.
- o Monitor your student-athletes progress on the field and in the classroom.
- o Accompany your team to all games.
- o Monitor the conduct of your athletes for the duration of each game.
- o Always have in your possession:
 - A copy of your official roster
 - A copy of the terms and conditions
 - Emergency contact information for each student-athlete completed within the last two (2) years. (Must be on file with the school principal).

Coaches Stipend

- Coaches can receive up to a maximum of 4 stipends per season
 - o 5/6th Level: CTU Negotiated Rate
 - Coaches may not receive payment/stipend if all mandatory requirements are not complete.
 - o 7/8th Level: CTU Negotiated Rate
 - Coaches may not receive payment/stipend if all mandatory requirements are not complete.
- Requirements include;
 - o 5th/6th Grade Coaches must complete the season without their team being dropped
 - If a team is dropped at any point during the season, the coach will forfeit their stipend. (Please refer to the Forfeit Section)
 - o 7th/8th Grade Coaches must complete the season without their team being dropped
 - If a team is dropped at any point during the season, the coach will forfeit their stipend. (Please refer to the Forfeit Section)

***Coaches/liaisons that are on a leave of absence at any time during a SCORE! season will NOT receive payment**

Each Sports Liaisons must complete the Staff & Coaches Directory via Google Classroom before the start of the season. Please confirm the coaches/sports are correct prior to docusign completion.

Section Three: Game Rules

This section identifies rules and requirements that are specific in nature to the CPS SCORE! Flag Football Program.

National Federation of High Schools and the Illinois High School Association

- The official rules of the National Federation of High Schools (NFHS) in conjunction with the Illinois High School Association (IHSA) rulebook govern all athletics rules and regulations at Chicago Public Schools.
- This rulebook communicates additional rules and regulations that are specific to Chicago Public Schools' athletics programs and activities.
- The rules and regulations in this rulebook supersede NFHS and/or IHSA rules and regulations where applicable.
- The CPS SCORE! Program is not a member of the Illinois Elementary School Association (IESA).

<http://www.nfhs.org/articles/rules-books-and-case-books-available-as-e-books/>

Contest Officials

- The Office of Sports Administration will assign an IHSA Official to each scheduled contest.
- There will be at least one (1) IHSA Official assigned to each game.
 - The IHSA Official shall examine and approve the field and game equipment.
 - At the end of games, the IHSA Official shall write the final score, sign and return the CPS official score sheet to the CPS Conference Commissioner designated to that site.
 - The IHSA Official shall be the sole judge of play, conduct of players, coaches, spectators, and other factors affecting the game.
 - The IHSA Official keeps the official score and time of the game
- There will be a Field Monitor assigned to each football field.
 - The Field Monitor is a person designated by the Office of Sports Administration to ensure rosters are present for each team playing, the ages and grade restrictions are being followed, students are playing at their appropriate grade level, and ensure that pinnies are distributed and collected when necessary, etc.
- During a situation when the assigned IHSA Official is not present at game time, the coach from each team will be expected to officiate the game.

Game Times

- All matches are scheduled 1 hour apart.
- **If a team is late by ten (10) minutes or more, they will forfeit the game.**

- **If a team is not ready to compete at the scheduled time of the flag football game with all of their players present, the team will play the game as long as the minimum number of six (6) players is present.**
- **Game Length Regular Season:**
 - Two (2) 20-twenty halves with a running clock for ALL LEVELS.
 - The clock stops in the final minute of each half.
 - All clock stoppages in the final minute of each half are limited to out of bounds, incomplete pass, or sack or injury.
 - **Once a team has a 40 point lead or more in the 2nd half the clock will continue to run, only stopping for injuries or at the referees discretion.**
 - Halftime: Five(5) minutes.
- **Play Clock**
 - 25-second play clock to snap the ball once it has been marked ready for play.
- **Throw Clock**
 - The quarterback is allowed a given time (five seconds) to throw the ball.
 - Time starts on the snap of the ball and stops as soon as the quarterback releases the ball.
 - If release is under the given time, the play continues. If the time has expired and the ball is not released the play is blown dead and will result in a loss of down.
 - The given time depends on grade level:
 - 5/6th Grade Throw Clock: 5 seconds
 - 7/8th Grade Throw Clock: 5 seconds

Team Configuration

- **Team captain**
 - Each team shall designate a team captain.
 - This player is the team representative.
 - May address an official to obtain essential information
 - May address an official on matters of interpretation
- **Each team must have a minimum of six (6) players to start a game.**
 - If a team has fewer than six (6) eligible players on the field, the opponent will be declared the winner by forfeit.
 - All eligible players participating in the game must appear on the team's Official Game Roster. This roster shall be given to the CPS Conference Commissioner prior to the start of the season. The roster must be signed by the school's principal. Teams not adhering to this rule shall forfeit the game.

Offense:

- The offense should consist of one (1) quarterback and six (6) eligible receivers. One of those receivers must be the center, but is still an eligible receiver. **THE QUARTERBACK CANNOT RUN.**

Defense:

- Seven (7) players should be on defense.
- **RUSHING THE QUARTERBACK IS NOT ALLOWED.**

Huddles

- 5/6th Grade: One offensive and defensive coach may be in the huddle with players between plays. When the huddle breaks, the coaches must move off the field to the side of their team sideline.
- 7/8th Grade: **No coaches can be present in the huddle.**

Snap

- The snap may be an underhand toss, overhead toss or a handoff.
- The exchange of the snap must be from one offensive player to another offensive player, the quarterback may not snap the ball to himself.
- A muffed snap is not a fumble / dead ball. The throw clock remains in effect on muffed snaps.
 - Pre Snap motioning is NOT ALLOWED. All players must be set before the snap of the ball.
 - Audible movement before the snap is ALLOWED. All players must be set before the ball is snapped.

Passing, Catching, and Possession

- It will be considered a legal forward pass when the offensive player, from behind the line of scrimmage, throws the ball forward over the line of scrimmage. This is only allowed once per down.
 - All passes must cross the line of scrimmage
 - A team **CANNOT** throw multiple forward passes in a single play.
 - **Pitching/lateral passes are not allowed on any down**
 - **Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.**
- **No RUN plays are allowed on 1st, 2nd, 3rd downs and/or PAT's. The offense has the option to run or pass the ball ONLY on their 4th down possessions.**
 - **THE QUARTERBACK CANNOT RUN.** A legal run is a **HANDOFF** to the running back.
 - **Pitching/lateral passes are NOT allowed on any down**
 - Running the ball prior to 4th down will result in an automatic loss of a down (**loss of the right to repeat the down**).
- If players from opposing teams catch the football simultaneously, the ball will be declared a catch for the offense.

- A player must have one (1) foot down inbounds for it to be considered a catch / possession.

Blocking

- Blocking is not allowed.

Flag Pulling

- A legal flag pull takes place when the ball-carrier is in full possession of the football.
- If a player's flag/belt inadvertently falls off during a play while that player has possession, the player is down immediately and the play ends. The ball is placed where the flag lands.
- Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball-carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the head, hand, ball, arm or shoulder or intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey. FLAG GUARDING IS NOT ALLOWED.

Stripping the Ball

- Once a player has possession, the opposing player cannot knock the ball out of the controlling player's hand or a penalty will be assessed.
- It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball-carrier's possession at any time.

Moving the Ball and Downs

- Possession always begins at the 40-yard line.
- The offense must gain at least 15 yards in 4 or less plays or the defense takes over. (There is no kicking).
 - Each team has 4 downs to get a 1st down.
 - To obtain a 1st down;
 - From the 40-yard line to the 25-yard line
 - From the 25-yard line to the 10-yard line
 - From the 10-yard line to the endzone (Touchdown)
- The field is marked at 15-yard intervals with cones: 40-yard line, 25-yard line, and 10-yard line (3 first downs without a penalty would result in a touchdown).

Substitution

- Substitutions may be made on any dead ball

Scoring

- The following point values will be granted:
 - Six (6) points for a touchdown
 - One (1) point for a PAT from the 3-yard line
 - Two (2) points for a PAT from 8-yard line
 - Three (3) points for turnover on downs or interception
 - Turnover on a PAT is ruled a dead ball.

- Once a team has a 40 point lead or more in the 2nd half the clock will continue to run, only stopping for injuries or at the referees discretion.

Offensive Penalties

- It will be the defense's decision whether an offensive penalty will result in a 5-yard penalty or the outcome of the play will stand as spotted.
- Possible Offensive Penalties include, but are not limited to:
 - Off-sides
 - Delay of game (automatic 5-yd loss)
 - Offensive team is responsible for retrieving and returning the ball to the previous spot or the new line of scrimmage. Clock does not stop and any delay by offense in retrieving and returning the ball to the referee will result in a delay of game and will be a 5-yard penalty from the original line of scrimmage.
 - If the quarterback throws the ball after the play has been blown dead, a penalty for offensive delay of game will be assessed.
 - If the play clock expires before the offense snaps the ball, a delay of game penalty will be assessed.
 - Pass interference: when any offensive player's movement beyond the line of scrimmage SIGNIFICANTLY hinders the progress of an eligible player's opportunity to catch the ball.
 - If the referee sees that the throw clock has exceeded given time, the play is blown dead. The ball should be spotted at the original line of scrimmage with a loss of down.
 - If defensive holding occurs on the same play as a sack, the defense will be penalized and the sack is void.
- Penalties received that result in loss of yardage but the yardage cannot be enforced due to the ball being on the 40 yard line will result in a loss of down.

Defensive Penalties

- All defensive penalties will result in a 5-yard penalty and repeat of down.
- Possible defensive penalties include, but are not limited to:
 - Off-sides
 - Defensive holding
 - Defensive pass interference:
 - When any defensive player's movement beyond the line of scrimmage SIGNIFICANTLY hinders the progress of an eligible player's opportunity to catch the ball.
 - If defensive pass interference happens on the 5-yard line, the result will be half the distance to the goal (2½ yard line).
 - Responsibility to avoid contact is with the defense. The defense is allowed initial disruption, and then must guard the receiver. Excessive or prolonged contact will result in a "tack on" penalty at the end of the play (5-yards added to the result of the play).

Defensive Penalties (Yards & Loss)

Live Ball/ Dead balls

- The receiver is legally down when a flag is pulled off of their belt.
- Excessive force by shoving, pushing, or striking a blow will be penalized by an automatic first down for the offense or a 10-yard penalty against the offense. A player can be expelled from the game if their actions are ruled unsportsmanlike & flagrant.
- Fumbles that hit the ground are dead balls at the spot that the ball was dropped.
- A muffed snap is not a fumble/dead ball. The throw clock remains in effect on muffed snaps.
- The quarterback is allowed a given time to throw the ball.
 - Time starts on the snap of the ball and stops as soon as the quarterback releases the ball.
 - If release is under the given time, the play continues. Play is blown dead after the given time has expired.
 - The given time depends on grade level:
 - 5/6th Grade Throw Clock: 5 seconds
 - 7/8th Grade Throw Clock: 5 seconds

Interceptions

- Interceptions may not be returned.
- Three (3) points are awarded to the team who intercepted the ball and that team is now on offense from the 40-yard line.

Timeouts

- Two (2) 60-second timeouts are allowed per game. Unused timeouts do not rollover, including in overtime.
- During each overtime, each team shall receive one 30-second timeout.

Overtime

- An overtime period will be played when the game ends with a tied score.
 - Each team will have an opportunity to score in four (4) plays from the ten-yard line.
 - Overtime Points After Touchdown (PAT): During the first and second overtime, the team may go for 1-point from the 3 yard-line or go for 2-points from the 8-yard line.
 - If a third overtime is needed, all PAT's must be 2-point attempts.
 - Overtime is not timed.
 - Each team is awarded one 30 second timeout during every overtime period.
- Unused timeouts do not rollover.

Mercy Rule:

- **Once a team has a 40 point lead or more in the 2nd half the clock will continue to run, only stopping for injuries or at the referees discretion.**

Sport-Specific Definitions & Key Terms

- **Blocking:** movement by a ball carrier's team in which one (1) player obstructs another player's path with their body (with or without contact)
- **Center:** player who snaps the ball to the quarterback
- **Dead ball:** a ball that has gone out of play or is deemed temporarily unplayable
- **Defensive holding:** when a defensive player grabs or holds an offensive player during the play
- **Defensive pass interference:** when any defensive players' movement beyond the line of scrimmage SIGNIFICANTLY hinders the progress of an eligible offensive player's opportunity to catch the ball
- **Delay of game:** when the offense allows the play clock to expire before the ball is snapped (see Offensive Penalty section for more details)
- **Excessive/prolonged contact:** any contact beyond 5-yards of the current line of scrimmage or any over aggressive contact (hard push or shove, throwing punches, intentional tripping or any contact to the face)
- **Goal line:** the line dividing the end zone from the field of play, this line must be crossed in order to score a touchdown
- **Hash marks:** a set of markings in the center of the field that assist the officials in spotting the ball after a play
- **Incomplete pass:** a legal forward pass that hits the ground before a player on either team gains possession
- **Line of scrimmage:** the imaginary line separating the teams at the beginning of a play and the place the ball is spotted (i.e. set) prior to a play
- **Muffed snap:** when the quarterback drops the snap from the center
- **Off-sides:** when an offensive or defensive player comes across the line of scrimmage before the snap of the ball
- **Offensive pass interference:** when any offensive players movement beyond the line of scrimmage SIGNIFICANTLY hinders the progress of an eligible defensive player's opportunity to catch the ball
- **Pitching/Lateral:** A backward pass or toss of the ball by the ball-carrier.
- **Point after touchdown (PAT):** the extra point attempt that occurs after a touchdown is scored by a team.
- **Possession:** the team who has the ball

- **Sack:** when the throw clock runs out before the quarterback has released the ball and play is blown dead by the official
- **Simultaneous catch:** when an offensive and defensive player catch the ball at the same time
- **Snap:** A backward pass from the center to the quarterback; this can be an underhand toss, overhead toss or a handoff
- **Stripping the ball:** a defender attempting to take the ball out of the receiver's hands while the receiver is running
- **Throw clock:** the given time for the quarterback to throw the ball from the time the ball is snapped
- **Turnover:** when a team loses possession of the football due to an interception
- **Turnover on Downs:** a situation where the team uses all **three** of their downs and fails to get a first down in the first two zones or score any points from the third zone
 - 1st zone: 40-yard line to 25-yard line
 - 2nd zone: 25-yard line to 10-yard line
 - 3rd zone: 10-yard line to the goal line

Football Field Dimension

- Field length: 40-yard line to the goal line. The ball starts at the 40; the first down lines are the 25-yard line and 10-yard line.
- Field Width: 30 yards minimum - 53.5 yards depending on field layout
- Minimum of 30 yards width only if field permits
- End zone length: 10 yards
- Field hash marks: High school dimensions

NOTE: Two games will be going on at the same time on opposite ends of the field.

Section Four: Safety & Sportsmanship

Coaches are expected to act in the best interest of the health and safety of the injured child. That means exercising reasonable caution, particularly as it relates to loss of consciousness, tears, strains, or suspected breaks or fractures.

According to school records, student-athletes must have approval by a physician to participate in physical education in order to participate in the CPS SCORE! Program.

Injuries and Serious Incidents

- The safety and security of students is always of paramount importance and cannot be over-emphasized.
- In the case of student injury, it is the responsibility of each coach to seek appropriate care.
- If of a serious nature, the coach should call 911 immediately.

Emergency Ambulance Transport

Any student-athlete who is not accompanied by a parent/guardian on contest day and has to receive transport to the hospital due to a severe injury, the following must occur:

- The Head Coach or Volunteer Coach must ride with the student-athlete to the hospital.
- Site Manager, CPS or CPD Commissioner or Office of Sports Administration staff must supervise the remaining teammates at designated sites.
- Above personnel must notify school officials and parent/guardian to arrange for student-athlete pick-up.

Blood Protocol

- If blood is involved, it may endanger others as well as the injured.
 - Individuals who have uncovered or open wounds or blood on themselves or clothing must leave the contest or practice immediately.
 - A participant may return only when the bleeding has stopped, the wound is covered, and/or the clothing has been changed.

Head Injuries

- In the event of a concussion, the coach must follow the appropriate procedures identified in the CPS Concussion Management Policy:
<http://policy.cps.edu/download.aspx?ID=258>

Reporting Incidents

- All serious incidents must be reported to the Office of Safety and Security by completing the appropriate Incident Reporting Form.

- o The coach of the athlete(s) involved in the incident is responsible for completing the Incident Reporting Form provided by the Office of Sports Administration.
- o The coach must provide the Incident Reporting Form to the appropriate elementary school liaison(s).
 - It is the responsibility of the elementary school liaison to report the incident within Verify, the CPS Incident Management System.
- All Incident Reporting Forms must be filed with the injured student's school liaison on the next business day.

First Aid & Safety

- Coaches are responsible for hydrating their student athletes.
- All schools must travel with a first aid kit and emergency contact information for every student athlete.

Sportsmanship

- All participating student-athletes, coaches, and staff are expected to exhibit good sportsmanship.
- To begin the match, the starting teams **must** line-up on the end lines. The official will call the teams together to shake hands before the match begins.
- A handshake at the end of each match is required.
- CPS enforces a zero tolerance policy as it relates to unsportsmanlike conduct related to fighting. Any participant who is involved in a fight or similar unruly or threatening behavior before, during, or after an activity may be barred from continued participation in the sport for the remainder of the season at the discretion of the Office of Sports Administration.

Spectator Conduct

- Parents, guardians, and other spectators are expected to exhibit good behavior.
- If a spectator, in the opinion of a contest IHSA Official or site manager, exhibits inappropriate or unsportsmanlike behavior, they may ask the spectator to leave the contest location. The Coach, IHSA Official, or Site Manager should work with the assigned CPS security personnel to assist in these situations.
- The contest IHSA Official shall make the High School Site Manager aware of any issues regarding spectator conduct.
- The High School Site Manager, as appropriate, shall report issues concerning inappropriate spectator conduct to the Office of Sports Administration.

Section Five: Protests

- All protests must be written to Jenni Dant at jldant@cps.edu and include sportsad@cps.edu.
- Must be submitted within 24 hours of the contest.
- If the contest is on a Saturday, the protest must be submitted by close of business (4:00pm) on the following Monday.
- No protest will be considered regarding judgment calls made by the official.
- Protests will only be considered where there is a question of rules interpretation, which affects the outcome of the game.
- No protest will be considered if the coach could not immediately produce a copy of the league rules for the contest official at the time of the questioned call.
- The protest letter must include the following:
 - School check (\$50.00) made out to the Office of Sports Administration.
 - Reason and details of protest.
 - Proof of protest.
 - Signature of person protesting.