

Flag Rugby Laws of the Game

While aspects of the Flag game have the potential to be self-refereeing, an official is still necessary and will give a sense of importance and significance to all participants. In some instances a coach will need to referee.

Point Scoring

The ball must be touched down (downward pressure from the hand, arm or upper body) in order to score a 5 point try. If a player, running with the ball in the field of play tackled and due to excitement, momentum or inattentiveness, is carried over the line and places the ball down, a try is not awarded but instead, the team last in possession is brought back to the "mark" of the tackle and play is restarted with a pass. However, if a player is running and is within 1 meter of the goal line, and has clearly initiated the downward motion with the ball toward the line (ball in motion and below waist level), a try will be awarded even if the flag was removed before crossing the line or touching down.

Running the Ball

Ball carriers must "Run at Spaces, not Faces". This means that every effort must be made to run around a defender, and may not in any way attempt to run "through" (directly at) a defender. Doing this will be considered a dangerous play. The referee shall stop play and remind the players to run at spaces. Play shall continue with the team currently in possession of the ball

The Tackle ("Flag!")

A tackle is made when a flag is removed. A ball carrier may not in any way attempt to guard or defend their flags; to do so will result in a penalty. The tackler must immediately indicate that a tackle has been made by holding up the flag and calling out TACKLE! It is important that players learn to not call out until they actually have the flag in their hand. The referee may then facilitate play by ordering "pass now".

The 2 Second Rule

Upon hearing the defender's call and the referee's order to "pass now", which takes about 2 seconds, the ball carrier has to play the ball. They may stop running first or may pass while in the process of stopping. If the ball is not passed in 2 seconds, a turnover will be awarded to the defenders at the point where the flag was pulled. The 2 second rule will be enforced in order to facilitate a "use it or lose it" environment for the game. This will also help avoid situations where a player is available to receive the ball, but the tackled player instead waits to throw it to a more favored teammate. This way everyone gets to play. Referee must manage this to allow some flexibility in timing, if the ball carrier has not heard the word TACKLE and if new or younger players are still acclimating to the game.

Returning the Flag

After a tackle, both tackler and tackled player are out of the game until the flag is returned. The flag must be handed to its owner, not thrown on the ground. Referee should stop play, explain the rules and restart with the same team in possession of the ball. The owner must be allowed to pass the ball and then the owner must accept the handed flag immediately. The tackler may reenter play as soon as the pulled flag is returned. The tackled player may re-enter play as soon as the flag has been re-attached.

The Flag Belt

The spirit of this section is that tacklers be afforded the opportunity to fairly pull a flag during the course of play. All players must be wearing the same style/make of flag-belt approved by the TRY Executive Committee for games. The referee will verify this as part of the 5-10 minute pre-game check. The flag belt must be worn around the waist, securely fastened and flags hanging in the manner instructed by the manufacturer. All of the flags provided with the belt must be worn on the belt. The flags must not be obstructed or covered by shirts or other clothing. A player who may inadvertently lose their belt or a flag may not participate in play until their flag-belt is returned to order. If this happens to a ball carrier, the referee shall call the tackle and pass now sequence.

Off-Sides

As in the adult game, a tackle sets the offside mark according to which all players must conform in order to continue play. Defensive players must retreat behind the point of the tackle before entering play. Loitering players who intentionally interfere with play should be encouraged by the referee to quickly return to an onside position. Loitering players or those poaching from an off sides position or intentional knock-on should result in the referee blowing the whistle and restarting play with the team last in possession of the ball.

Interfering with the Tackle

A ball carrier may not in any way interfere with a defenders attempt to grab their flag, and in particular they may not "swat" at the hand, "fend" or stiff arm the player that is attempting to get their flag.