



# **CONNECTICUT FLAG FOOTBALL LEAGUE**

SPRING 2024 COACHES TRAINING

# GENERAL

- Please use [admin@CTFlagFootball.com](mailto:admin@CTFlagFootball.com) for all communication, or call 860-263-9259 and leave a message.
- Please be sure to check your emails!
- Please make sure you complete the required background check.

# EXPECTATIONS FOR COACHES

## **What does it take to be a Head or Assistant Coach?**

While there is no experience necessary, there are some core characteristics that are required to coach in our league.

**Desire to work with children** – Do you enjoy spending time around kids? Do you want to make a positive impact on a child’s life? The best coaches seek to provide or contribute to the kids learning and overall experience for ALL players on their team, regardless of ability.

**Possess organizational skills** – Can you communicate with parents? Can you keep schedule? Although the league does all of the heavy lifting for you, Coaches need to be organized and communicate with their team.

**Exhibit patience, maturity, and dependability, sound character, strong morals.** – This important! At times there could be a frustrating situation with a child or parent, or maybe an official. It is important that our coaches show strong moral character, and can be calm in situations.

**Share the same values as CT Flag** – It is critical that all coaches strive to give every child the chance to learn the fundamental skills of every position and be able to apply those skills in games. Coaches will ensure an environment of safety, respect, and fair play. The league mission includes having a positive impact on the lives of the area youth, their families, and the community.

**Volunteers are required to complete the volunteer application and background check**

# EXPECTATIONS FOR COACHES

## (cont.)

### Communication

- Coaches will communicate consistently and proactively with their parents. We suggest asking for a parent to help.

### Practices

- Practices will be held regularly and will focus on individual and team development.
- As mentioned earlier, coaches are expected to communicate with their parents proactively, especially in regards to any unanticipated changes to the schedule.

### Games

- Referees will call all penalties – not coaches
- **Players or coaches may not question judgment calls**
  - Only the head coach may ask the referee questions about the rule clarification and rule interpretation
  - If a coach interrupts a game to question a call, they will be charged a timeout. If they are out of timeouts, they will receive an Unsportsmanlike Conduct Penalty
- Coaches are expected to adhere to the CT Flag code of conduct. Negative behavior, regardless of the circumstances, will not be tolerated.
- Only 3 coaches per team are allowed on the sidelines. If a team's coach is not abiding by the CT Flag code of conduct, then they will be removed from the sidelines and potentially suspended and/or removed from the league.
- **How you carry yourself sets the tone for the game. All eyes are on you, especially your kids! All coaches are expected to exhibit role model behavior for their kids, parents and other coaches.**

# PRACTICES

- Practice schedule is set. Each team has a regular practice night. Please do not change practice nights without approval from the league.
- Practices can be rescheduled for rain or special circumstances. Please check the league practice schedule for field availability.
- Please be mindful of parents time and stay on schedule. Please begin and end practices on time.
- Practices can ONLY be held at one of the assigned fields in the town your league is in. You cannot move your practice, informal or otherwise, to another town.
- Any field closures will be communicated via email. We will do our best to announce those by 3pm for weekday practices, and at least 90 minutes prior to the first game of the day on weekends. If you arrive at the field and the weather conditions change, please use your best judgement. You cannot practice if there is thunder and/or lightening, and games will be called should the threat of thunder or lighting be present in the area.

# ROSTERS, JERSEYS AND EQUIPMENT

## Rosters

- Teams must consist of at least seven players with a maximum of 11 players.
- Teams must start games with a minimum of five players. In the event of an injury, a team with insufficient substitute players may play with four players on the field but no fewer than four.

## Equipment

- Participants must use the flag belts provided by the league, have their protective head gear and a mouth guard at each game. Should a player lose his jersey, flags or protective head gear, replacements will need to be purchased by the parent. Parents should email [admin@CTFlagFootball.com](mailto:admin@CTFlagFootball.com), in the event replacement items are required.
- Players may wear custom flag belts, so long as they are similar socket style flag belts. Flag “poppers” or “sockets” that have been doctored in any way will result in disqualification from the game AND potential removal from the league.
- All players must wear mouth guards and protective head gear at all times while on the playing fields
- Footballs will be provided. Teams may use alternative ball, so long as it is the same size for their respective division.
- Players must wear sneakers or cleats. However, cleats with exposed metal are never allowed and must be removed.
- Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads and knee pads. Braces with exposed metals are not allowed.
- Players must remove all jewelry, hats and do-rags. Winter beanies are allowed.
- Players’ jerseys must be tucked into shorts or pants if they hang below the belt line. Quarterback handwarmers are not allowed due to the potential risk of obstruction to the flags and or injury to a potentially defender who may get their finger caught in it attempting to pull a flag.
- We recommend players wear shorts or pants that do not have pockets. Shorts or pants with belt loops or pockets must be taped. Games will not be delayed for a player to tape up pockets.

# JERSEYS & EQUIPMENT (cont.)

**Equipment:** Each Head coach will receive an equipment bag that includes the following:

- **Jerseys and belts for your exact number of players.** Each jersey was ordered for your players specific size request. Players keep their jerseys and belts at the end of the season.
- All flag belts are the same. Belts must be fitted to players and any extra belt MUST be tapped or cut so that excess belt material is not hanging.
- **Softshell Helmets** – it is the PARENT's responsibility to purchase protective headgear for their child.
- **One (1) footballs** – balls provided will be the balls used in games for your specific division
  - Pee Wee & Developmental = 6U/8U Ball (or blue NFL Flag ball)
  - Bantam, Junior & Senior = 10U/12U ball (or brown NFL Flag ball).
  - Balls must be returned at the end of the season.
- **Training Cones** – must be returned at the end of the season.
- **One (1) Whistle** – you keep those 😊
- **Coaches Shirt** – One per coach.

NOTE: Players keep their jerseys, flag belts and softshell helmets (if ordered) at the end of the season.

Other Items

- Wrist Coaches (Junior & Senior Division) – CT Flag no longer provides wrist coaches. Coaches wishing to purchase them can do so from [www.epicsports.com](http://www.epicsports.com) or any other website where they are found.
- Each location has a robust first aid kit as well as ice packs. Coaches are free to use the first aid kit and grab ice packs as needed.

# JERSEYS AND EQUIPMENT (cont.)

## Equipment Fitting:

### Flag Belt

- League provided flag belts or approved socket style flag belts
  - Custom flag belts may be worn ONLY if they are the socket style flag belts.
  - Must be socket style belt
  - Yellow or green NFL Flag belts are permitted. Cannot have mismatched flag colors.
- The socket must face down and away from the body (as pictured)
- Flags cannot be the same color as shorts or pants.
- Shrumz style flag belts MUST have “youth” poppers.

### Mouthguard

- All players on the field must be wearing a mouthguard
- Protective Head Gear
  - All Players must be properly wearing their protective headgear.

### Apparel

- Jerseys must be tucked in while on the playing field. For larger children who may struggle to keep their jerseys in, player must have his flag belt on top of the jersey and not obstructed in any way.
- Shorts: No pockets on shorts or pants.
- Wrist coaches are to be worn on player’s arm only



# SCHEDULE & TEAM ASSIGNMENTS

## Schedules

- Schedules are set and can only be changed at special request. **Special requests are considered, not promised.**
- Schedules and Teams assigned and managed on our website.
- **All game cancellations, schedule changes and updates will be made through the website and communicated via email.**
- Be sure to use a consistent method of communication so that you can contact all parents. Email, text, phone or other group communication apps such as Game Changer, Band, etc. are all suitable.
- All games will be played generally on Sundays. Make-up games will be scheduled on a case-by-case basis.
- Practices will be scheduled 60 minutes during the week. Additional practices can be scheduled at the discretion of the coach and are not mandatory.

# **BEST PRACTICES FOR NEW COACHES**

- **Have a routine and be prepared for practice.**
  - 50% of the time on individual skills, 50% of the time on positions and team strategy!
  - Do not spend all of your practice time on running routes and pulling flags!
- **Do not change player positions between plays!**
  - Have the kids practice the position during the week that they will play on Sunday!
  - You CANNOT design plays in the huddle with children
- **Pee Wee 6U – start slow and build off of one basic set/formation.**
- **Pee Wee 6U – come up with 2-3 plays and run them in either direction.**
- **Rotate kids through all positions, unless they don't want to.**
- **Junior Division & above – utilize wrist coaches**

# FAIR PLAY RULES

This system is designed to provide every player an equal opportunity for improvement. The fair play system ensures that:

- Every child starts on either offense or defense
- Every player that appears in a game must be on the field at least 50% of the time
- If a team has seven or more players on its roster for a particular game, then no one player is allowed to play every down and the ball should be distributed fairly among the players
- Lopsided game scores of 28 points or more should be avoided. If the “mercy rule” is applied, then the winning team must limit the usage of “stronger” players in key positions.
- If a team wins 3 consecutive games by way of the Mercy Rule, the 3<sup>rd</sup> game, and any game by Mercy Rule, thereafter, will be recorded as a loss for that team.
- Coaches not adhering to the Fair Play rules are subject to replacement and will not be accepted back in future seasons.

# RESOURCES

- **Game Play Rules** – can be found on our website [www.CTFlagFootball.com](http://www.CTFlagFootball.com) under “Coaching Resources”
- [www.myfootballplays.com](http://www.myfootballplays.com) or [www.flagfootballplaymaker.com/app/](http://www.flagfootballplaymaker.com/app/) – great resource for designing and printing play sheets and inserts for wrist coaches.
- [www.flagfootballacademy.com](http://www.flagfootballacademy.com) – playbooks, plays and drills
- YouTube

