

Flag Football

Flag football is a version of [American football](#) or [Canadian football](#) where the basic rules of the game are similar to those of the mainstream game (often called "tackle football" for contrast), but instead of tackling players to the ground, the defensive team must remove a flag or flag belt from the ball carrier ("deflagging") to end a down.

Variations

Chiefly because there is no dominant sanctioning organization for the sport, the game has mutated into many variations: 9-man, 8-man, 7-man, 5-man, and 4-man on a side; coed or single-gender; with kicking and punting and without; with point-after conversions (including some with 1, 2, and 3 point tries) or without; and field sizes that vary from full [CFL](#) size, [NFL](#) size (120 yards long by 53½ yards wide), to fields a third that size.

An important distinction is whether [linemen](#) are allowed to catch passes ("Eligible Linemen") or, as in the [CFL](#) / [NFL](#), are not allowed to do so ("Ineligible Linemen"). Flag (and [touch](#)) football may also be divided into "contact" or "non-contact", depending on whether or not [blocking](#) is allowed; if allowed, blocking is usually restricted to the [chest](#).

In non-contact flag football, there is no blocking, usually no linemen, and if there are linemen they cannot use their hands to block an opponent. In some leagues defensive players may not get in the way of a runner; they can only attempt to grab the flag without impeding the path of the runner. Offensive players are not allowed to hand block defensive players to prevent them from grabbing the flag. In contact flag football there are typically linemen blocking only around chest area.

The ability or inability for the quarterback to advance the ball past the line of scrimmage by running is another rule subject to variation by league.

Basic rules

The specific rules of flag football vary widely by league, though all share in common their replication of the rules of traditional [American football](#) with tackling replaced by flag-pulling. Traditional American football rules are often omitted or simplified to reflect the more recreational nature of the game, desire to avoid physical contact and injury, and the generally smaller number of participating players per side.

Competition

The sport has a strong amateur following and several national and international competitions each year sponsored by various associations.

International

The [International Woman's Flag Football Association](#), otherwise known as the IWFFA, hosts 8 on 8 flag football tournaments and flag football trainings across the world with participants from the [United States](#), [Canada](#), [Mexico](#), [Sweden](#), [Norway](#), [Finland](#), [Denmark](#), Iceland, Scotland and several other nations. The organization is the largest organization for women and girls in the sport of flag football. The most active tournament is held each February in [Key West, Florida](#), called the Kelly McGillis Classic where over 90 women and girls teams participate in 8 on 8, semi-blocking contact flag football. There are no restrictions for girls and women to play.

The International Flag Football Festival (IFFF) organizes the [World Cup of Flag Football](#) featuring teams from the [United States](#), [Mexico](#) and several other nations.

The [International Federation of American Football](#) (IFAF) organizes the IFAF Flag Football World Championship every two years since 2002.

North America

The United States Flag and Touch Football League (USFTL) has a number of smaller organizations spread out over the US. Located in Ohio, this league supports a number of teams from the Mid Atlantic, NorthEast, and Midwest states. On the west coast XFLAGFOOTBALL has over 15 leagues throughout Southern California and Hawaii. In the south, FlagFootballX hosts many of the largest 5on5 cash tournaments, located in Dallas, TX. Texan Flag Football hosts many large tournaments and leagues in the Houston area as well. TAAF hosts a yearly 8on8 State Championship at a rotating location throughout Texas and a couple other events throughout the year. FlagSpin lists all of Texas and the bordering states tournaments in one location to browse but does not host their own events.

The [NFL](#) conducts their own Youth World Championship for children 12–14 years of age, held in different nations around the world. It is five-man no contact football played between ten countries. Previous NFL Flag Football World Championships have been held in Beijing, Cologne, Mexico City, Tokyo, Toronto, and Vancouver. The NFL has also at times sanctioned "Air It Out" competitions aimed primarily at its fans in which tournament-winning teams were allowed to compete against retired NFL [All-Pros](#). "Air It Out" has now been rebranded as "Let It Fly" a nationwide tour operated by [North American Sports Group](#). Many universities around the continent have flag football divisions and leagues.

Europe

Flag football competition in the [United Kingdom](#) is organized by the [BAFA Community Leagues](#). At a senior level as of 2011, it is played by fifteen teams divided into two regional conferences, North (Scotland), and South (England & Wales) with the top teams qualifying for playoffs at the end of the season. The league also organizes teams competing at youth and cadet levels. Flag matches in the UK are played with five players on each side with no contact, and are officiated according to the IFAF flag football rules with a few minor variations.

In [Germany](#), both 5 vs 5 and 9 vs 9 are played. While the former is played with no contact in a wide range of leagues and ages, the latter is played as per the above mentioned "contact" rules,

with blocking to the chest being allowed. Most teams playing 9 vs 9 Flag Football are organized into two conferences within the DFFL (Deutsche Flag Football Liga) and compete for the DFFL Bowl.

Asia

In Korea, the biggest tournament is the National Flag Football Tournament held by the Korean Flag Football Federation (KFFF). It attracts up to 20 teams, from middle school students to adults.

In Indonesia, there is the Indonesian Flag Football Association, or IFFA. IFFA was established on February 14, 2009 as a continuation of its predecessor, the Indonesian Flag Football League, that had been defunct since 2001.

IFFA is divided into a minor and major league, and a yearly draft is held for the players who are moving up from the minors. Currently, the IFFA major league comprises six men's teams, and is in its fifth season. The current season(2012–13) will conclude with the playing of the championship game, The Senayan Bowl. This is scheduled for April 6, 2013 at the Senayan Sports Complex in Jakarta.

Source: Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.