

Sussex Flag Football

1st & 2nd Grade

Referee Guide

Relax! Nothing you do will ruin the game. The main thing is to be fair and remember that these are just children playing the game, not NFL players.

How to prepare for being a team ref - Most of the rules in Flag Football and penalties are very similar to that of tackle football. The first thing that you should do is read the rules several times so that they are fresh in your memory. Don't worry if you don't remember the penalty for each infraction, as you will have a small sheet to look at during the game that tells what the penalty for each infraction is.

What to do while on the field as a ref - Each game will have one team ref from each team. If you see a penalty, you can throw a flag. **(Don't be too picky, remember the age of the players.) Don't blow your whistle unless you are absolutely sure that the play should be stopped for that penalty.** (If it should have been stopped, and you did not blow the whistle, the ball can be brought back, but if you blow the whistle and the play should not have been stopped, you cannot resume the play where it was.) In 1st & 2nd grade, we suggest letting many of the penalties go without throwing a flag. It is better at this level to just talk to the player at the end of the play and let them know what they did wrong. Of course, if a player or team repeatedly commits the same penalty, throwing a flag will help the children remember not to do that again. After any play that a flag is thrown, all refs will meet in the middle of the field to discuss the call. After each play we need to get the ball spotted as soon as possible. If the play goes out of bounds or becomes dead within 10 yards of the sideline, the ball should be spotted about 15 yards from the sideline. (That is about 5 yards from the center of the field.) Otherwise the ball should be spotted in the center of the field. The ref closest to the ball when the play becomes dead should mark a spot with his/her foot for the new line of scrimmage and another ref should mark the spot where the ball will actually be spotted. If the down marker and chains are on the side of the field that you are on, please make sure that they are in the right spot and that the down marker is changed to show what down it is. Make sure during the game that all player's flags are hanging at their sides, not in front or in back of them. The flags are moveable on the belt, so it will be easy for the player to correct this.

On Punting Plays - Please do not call **offsides for movement on Punt plays**. As per our rules, if there is any movement on punting plays, we will have the player reset and tell the punter to continue. If there is repeated movement, then you may call a penalty for offsides.

That's It - Being a ref is not too hard. The hardest thing is to see all of the penalties because the game moves very fast. Remember, if you make a mistake, it is not the end of the world and if the mistake was throwing the flag when no penalty was actually committed, you can correct the mistake by picking up the flag.