

Sussex Flag Football

3rd – 6th Grades

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 at least one main ref and one team ref from each team. We want you to position yourself on the line of scrimmage, at the opposite side of the field from your team, at the beginning of each play. If you see a penalty, we want you to 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.) After any play that a flag is thrown, all refs will meet in the middle of the field and the ref that threw the flag will tell the main ref what the penalty was. The main ref has the right to overrule any penalty that a team ref calls. This is done to keep the games fair and also to keep the calls consistent from one game to the next. The main ref will then announce what the penalty is and mark off the penalty. 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. Please help get the ball spotted. The main ref does **NOT** have to be the one to spot the ball. 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, the head ref 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, the main ref can correct the mistake by overriding your call.