CBS Thanksgiving Flag Football Tournament Rules

Tournament Overview

A one-day, co-ed, 7v7, non-contact flag football tournament for CBS students, played as a single-elimination bracket from the first game until one team is crowned champion.

Detail	Info
Date	**11/21/26**
Check-in	**At 9:30 am** at least 30 minutes before your first game
Location	**[TBD]**
Format	**7v7 co-ed, single elimination from the first round**
Game length	**Two 15-minute halves, running clock**
Eligibility	**Current CBS students only, all players must sign the waiver**

Key rules at a glance

- 7 players on the field, with at least 2 women at all times
- A woman must be the operative player (throw, run or catch) at least once every 3 downs
- No contact, no blocking, no tackling, and no diving with the ball
- One flag pulled ends the play
- Defenders may rush after a 5-second count, and the QB cannot run until the defense rushes
- No kickoffs or punts. Every possession starts at the offense's own 5-yard line

Teams, Rosters and Co-Ed Rules

Each team fields 7 players, with no more than 5 men and at least 2 women on the field at all times.

Rosters

- Rosters may have up to [10–12] players. All must be current CBS students who registered and signed the waiver.
- A team needs at least 5 players, including at least 1 woman, to start a game. Fewer than that is a forfeit.
- Teams may play short-handed (5 or 6 players) but may never have more than 5 men on the field.
- Rosters lock at check-in. A team may pick up an unrostered registered player only with the tournament director's approval, and that player cannot play QB.
- Substitutions happen between plays and are unlimited.

Co-ed rule: the female operative play

A woman must be the operative player at least once in every 3 consecutive downs. A woman is the operative player when she is:

- The intended receiver on a forward pass, in the referee's judgment
- The primary ball carrier on a run, whether or not she gains yards
- The QB who throws a forward pass

These do **not** count as an operative play: snapping the ball, handing off to a man, or taking a handoff and giving the ball back to a man behind the line of scrimmage.

These **do** count: a pass intended for a woman that is tipped and caught by someone else, a female QB being sacked, or a male QB being sacked on a mandatory female play.

Penalty: Running 3 straight downs without a female operative player is a loss of down, and the next play must use a woman as the operative player.

Field, Equipment and Game Timing

Games are two 15-minute halves on a 70 x 30 yard field with 10-yard end zones.

Field

- The playing field is 50 yards between the goal lines, plus a 10-yard end zone at each end.
- Midfield (the 25-yard line) is the only first-down line.
- Conversions are run from the 5-yard line (1 point) or the 10-yard line (2 points).

Equipment and attire

- Flag belts are provided and must be worn at the hips, outside the shirt.
- Shirts must be tucked in or short enough that they do not cover the flags.
- Sneakers or molded rubber cleats (recommmended) only. No metal cleats.
- No jewelry. Hats and sunglasses are allowed.
- Mouthguards are recommended but not required
- Teams should wear matching colors. Pinnies are provided if both teams match.

Game timing

- Two 15-minute halves with a 2-minute halftime.
- The clock runs continuously except for timeouts, injuries, and the last 2 minutes of the second half.
- In the last 2 minutes, the clock stops on incomplete passes, out-of-bounds plays, scores, turnovers, and penalties, but only if the game is within 14 points.
- Each team has 1 timeout per half (30 seconds). Timeouts do not carry over.
- The offense has 25 seconds to snap after the ball is spotted.
- **Mercy rule:** A lead of 28 or more points with 5 minutes or less left in the second half ends the game.

Starting play

- Captains play rock, paper, scissors before the game. The winner chooses to start on offense or defense, or picks a direction. The other team gets that choice in the second half.
- There are no kickoffs. Every possession starts at the offense's own 5-yard line, including after scores and turnovers on downs.

- The offense gets 4 downs to cross midfield. Once across, it gets 4 more downs to score. Failing either time is a turnover on downs, and the other team starts at its own 5-yard line.
- There are no punts.

Scoring and Gameplay

Touchdowns are worth 6 points, followed by a 1- or 2-point conversion attempt.

Scoring

Play	Points
Touchdown	6
Conversion from the 5-yard line	1
Conversion from the 10-yard line	2
Defensive return of an intercepted 2-point try	2
Safety	2, and the scoring team gets the ball at its own 5-yard line

A 1-point try that is intercepted is dead and cannot be returned. There are no field goals.

Snap and passing

- The center snaps the ball from the ground between the legs or to the side. Whoever takes the snap is the QB.
- All offensive players must be set for 1 second before the snap. One player may be in motion, parallel to the line.
- One forward pass per play, thrown from behind the line of scrimmage.
- Everyone is an eligible receiver, including the center.
- A receiver needs one foot in bounds for a catch.
- Laterals and handoffs are allowed behind the line. Laterals are allowed anywhere on the field, but forward laterals past the line of scrimmage are illegal.
- A ball that touches the ground is dead. Fumbles are dead at the spot and stay with the offense, and there is no stripping.
- Interceptions can be returned.

Rushing the QB

- The defense may rush with one or more players after a 5-second count ("1 Mississippi … 5 Mississippi") called loudly by the rusher or the referee.
- Rushers may line up anywhere but cannot cross the line of scrimmage until the count ends.
- The count is off as soon as the ball is handed off, pitched, or faked, and the defense may rush immediately.
- The QB may not run past the line of scrimmage until a defender rushes, but may run on any play after a handoff or lateral.
- Rushers must go for the flag, not the ball, and may not touch the QB's arm or body.

Flag pulling and dead balls

The play is dead when:

- A flag is pulled from the ball carrier, or a flag falls off. A player whose flag falls off is down by one-hand touch.
- The ball carrier steps out of bounds or a knee touches the ground.
- The ball touches the ground on a pass, snap, or fumble.
- A touchdown, safety, or conversion is scored.

Ball carriers may not dive, or jump to avoid a flag pull, and may not flag guard by blocking the flags with hands, arms, or the ball.

Contact and Penalties

This is a non-contact league. Every player is responsible for avoiding contact.

Contact rules

- No blocking, holding, tackling, or pushing. Players may screen by standing still with arms at their sides, and opponents must go around them.
- Ball carriers may not lower a shoulder, stiff-arm, or run through a defender who has established position.
- Defenders may not bump receivers or knock the ball loose. Go for the flag, not the player.
- Incidental contact while both players are going for the ball is not a penalty.
- A second flagrant contact foul by the same player is an ejection from that game.

Penalties

All penalties are enforced from the line of scrimmage unless noted. Half the distance applies when a penalty would move the ball more than half the way to the goal line.

Penalty	Yards	Result
Offsides or early rush (defense)	5	Replay the down
Too many players (either team)	5	Replay the down
False start or illegal motion	5	Replay the down
Delay of game	5	Replay the down
Illegal forward pass	5	Loss of down
QB runs before the rush	5	Loss of down
Flag guarding	5 from the spot	Loss of down
Diving or jumping with the ball	5 from the spot	Loss of down
Offensive pass interference	10	Loss of down

Penalty	Yards	Result
Illegal contact, blocking, or holding (offense)	10	Loss of down
Defensive pass interference	Spot of the foul	Automatic first down
Illegal contact or holding (defense)	10	Automatic first down
Roughing the passer	10	Automatic first down
No female operative play in 3 downs	None	Loss of down
Unsportsmanlike conduct	15	Second one is an ejection

If a penalty happens on the final play of a half, the offense may run one more untimed down.

Tournament Format and Overtime

Every game is single elimination. Win and you advance, lose and you're out, until one team wins the championship.

Bracket

- The bracket is set by random draw and posted at check-in.
- With [8] teams, there are 3 rounds: quarterfinals, semifinals, and the championship. If the number of teams is not a power of 2, byes in the first round are drawn at random.
- The team listed first in each matchup chooses to start on offense or defense, or picks a direction.
- There are no ties. Any game tied at the end of regulation goes to overtime.

Schedule

- First round starts at **[time]**, semifinals around **[time]**, and the championship around **[time]**.
- Games run back to back, so teams should be at their field 5 minutes before their scheduled start.

Championship

- The championship is the final game of the day.
- The champion takes home the **[Turkey Bowl trophy]** and bragging rights.

Overtime

- Each team gets one possession from the opponent's 10-yard line, with 4 downs to score.
- The team that wins rock, paper, scissors chooses to go first or second.
- After a touchdown, teams must go for 2 points. An interception ends the possession and cannot be returned.
- If still tied after both possessions, repeat. From the third round on, each team runs a single play from the 5-yard line until one team scores and the other does not.
- All co-ed rules apply in overtime.

Forfeits

- A team that is not ready to play 5 minutes after its scheduled start forfeits, and its opponent advances.
- A team that forfeits is out of the tournament.

Sportsmanship, Safety and Weather

This is a social tournament among classmates, so play hard, play clean, and keep it fun.

- **Referees:** Each game has a head referee [and a side judge] from the tournament staff. Only team captains may discuss calls, and calmly. Referee decisions are final.
- **Unsportsmanlike conduct:** Taunting, arguing calls, abusive language, or excessive contact is a 15-yard penalty. A second one is an ejection from the game. Fighting is an immediate ejection from the tournament.
- **Injuries:** The referee stops the clock for any injury. An injured player must leave for at least one play. [First aid and water] will be available at check-in.
- **Waiver:** No one may play without a signed waiver.
- **Weather:** Games are played in rain or cold. The tournament director may delay or cancel for lightning or unsafe field conditions, and updates will be posted in [the tournament group chat].
- **Disputes:** Any rule not covered here is decided by the tournament director, [Name].