

Spring 2021 Boston FLAG Flag Football Covid-19 Protocols



Overview and General Safety:

Boston F.L.A.G. Flag Football and its players will adhere with local and state guidelines. These protocols apply to all participants in our league, even if they have been vaccinated.

Playing flag football comes with inherent risks (from twisted ankles to concussions). The COVID-19 pandemic has brought additional risks to group activities/sports. Our Board of Directors has developed these modifications to lower risks and transmission of COVID-19 using national and state guidelines and input from other sports leagues. While the safety of our players is of utmost concern, the decision to participate in F.L.A.G. Flag Football in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic lies with each player. By participating, each player waives any claims it has or might have against F.L.A.G. Flag Football that in any way arises from injuries or other damages suffered during the course of league play or events, including those related to COVID-19.

Rule Modifications:

The established rule book is still in effect with the exception of rule 1.4.8g which prohibits the use of face coverings.

Masks/Face Coverings:

All participants (players, referees, board members, etc.) are required to wear cloth face coverings/masks, which shall always cover both the nose and mouth. Gaiters are not acceptable, except for referees.

Face coverings consisting of multiple layers and a tighter weave are more effective and mandatory. Masks with valves or filters are not permitted.

The most effective fabrics for masks, according to guidelines, are:

- Tightly woven fabrics, such as cotton and cotton blends
- Breathable
- Two or three layers

Less effective fabrics for cloth masks, according to guidelines, are:

- Loosely woven fabrics, such as loose knit fabrics
- Those that are difficult to breathe through (like plastic or leather)
- Single layer

Masks may be briefly taken off for drinking or when necessary for breathing difficulties. Mask breaks may only be taken when greater than 6 feet of distance can be maintained from all others.

It is strongly recommended that players bring a spare face covering in the event of a “Face Covering Malfunction”.

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Pre-Game Day Procedures:

- **Screening Process:**

If a player is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 prior to arriving at the fields, they are prohibited from playing on that date.

- Prior to the start of games all players, referees, & other participants must go through the screening process before being allowed to play.
- Screenings will be completed and documented by Board Members.
- Screenings will be done on a team by team basis to ensure an orderly completion.
- If someone does not agree to the screening process, they will not be allowed to participate.
- The screening process will include:
 - Temperature checks for all players.
 - If a player has a temperature over 100 degrees Fahrenheit that player will not be allowed to participate that day and will be required to produce a negative COVID-19 test result before returning the following week.
 - Covid pre-screening questions:
 - Have you been in contact with anybody that has tested positive for COVID-19?
 - Have you experienced any symptoms of COVID-19?
 - Have you traveled outside Massachusetts in the last 2 weeks?
 - Have you tested positive for COVID-19 within 10 days?

Game Protocols:

- **Field Set-up:**

- We will run a 2-field setup, with space between Field 1 and 2 being increased to help aid in social distancing.
- Teams will be separated on opposite sidelines to ensure adequate space is utilized for the team area to allow for proper distancing.
 - The players' boxes in all cases will begin 2 yards from each sideline and extend to each of the 10 yard lines to provide ample distance between on-field and off-field players.

- **Scheduling:**

Game times will be scheduled to minimize the amount of players at the fields and to allow time for players to clear the fields in between the 4 team switch over.

- Only 4 teams will be allowed at the fields.
- Players will not be allowed on the fields until 30 minutes prior to the start of their game.
- After completion of their games, players must vacate the fields promptly in order to allow for the next pod of teams to take the field.

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- **Game Play:**
 - One captain from each team and one official for the coin toss.
 - Only refs are allowed to manage on-field equipment (i.e. pucks, down markers, 10 yard marker, etc).
 - Footballs cannot be shared between teams.
 - Flags should not be shared between players or teams.
 - Flags shall be disinfected in between games in which flags will be used by another team.(i.e. in between the 4 team switch over). It is each team's responsibility to do this after use. Sanitizer will be provided.
 - Players are encouraged to wear gloves (except for a quarterback's throwing hand).
 - The use of wristbands is highly encouraged to decrease the number of offensive huddles necessary during play.
 - All players are required to wear a mask while playing. Masks must cover the nose and mouth the entire time.
 - Referees will be required to wear a mask while officiating a game.
 - Players are encouraged to use hand sanitizer often and as needed (which will be provided).
 - Non-Play Contact
 - No handshake lines at the end of games.
 - Players should refrain from physical contact with teammates, opposing players, captains and referees.
 - If players need to speak to the referee they must maintain 6 feet distance.

- **Player habits:**

Players should work to break old habits and create new ones to minimize the spread of COVID. Spitting, nose clearing on the field, licking fingers, and spitting on gloves during games is not permitted. The habit of minimizing any touching of the face and covering the cough should be practiced. Hands/gloves should be sanitized accordingly.

Spectators:

Spectators are not permitted to attend our games to limit the amount of attendees and to be in-line with state guidelines.

Player Suspensions or Disqualifications:

- Any player not following the protocols will be given 1 warning.
- After receiving their 1st warning, if the player is still not following the protocols, the player will be asked to leave the fields for the day.
- Referees are ultimately responsible for providing warnings and removing a player from the field. Any protocol violations should be brought to their attention.
- The Board reserves the right to disqualify players not following the protocols for the day or entire Spring season without a refund.