



2024 SW Area FLAG FOOTBALL

AREA TOURNAMENT: **Friday, August 2nd**

Coach Check-In- 9:00-9:30AM, Opening Ceremony- 9:30AM, Game Start- 9:45AM

LOCATION: **Carmichael Field, West Plains, MO 65775**

PHYSICALS, RATING SUMMARY ROSTER FORM, UNIFIED PARTNER FORMS, CLASS A's, MEAL COUNT FORM, & ROSTER DEADLINE: July 9th.

Coaches:

Be sure to rate your players using the assessment form located at <https://somo.org/ffball#coach>. This page also will link you to a training video & rules. The individual assessment scores will be submitted on the Rating Summary Roster form which will need to be submitted with your paperwork.

COMPETITION NOTES:

- If the heat index on the day of the tournament is forecasted to be 105F or higher, the event will follow a heat schedule or be cancelled. Coaches will be notified as soon as possible if questionable conditions exist.
- All athletes on your roster must have current physicals. Please bring copy of all athlete physicals with you to the competition in case of emergency.
- Lunches provided for Athletes, Unified Partners, Bus Drivers, and Coaches only. All others will need to provide their own meals/beverages. There is no concession stand.

SOMO STATE OUTDOOR GAMES

DATE: October 11-13- tentative

LOCATION: Jefferson City- tentative

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Please direct any questions to:
Special Olympics Missouri
Jesse Williams, Program Director
E-mail: jwilliams@somo.org

Flag Football Rules

SOI Flag Football Rules:

https://media.specialolympics.org/resources/sports-essentials/other-sports/Flag-Football-Rules.pdf?_ga=2.227518941.1526695534.1572377570-135561889.1571931120

Flag Football Roster Form:

<https://somo.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/FFB-Roster.pdf>

The Official Special Olympics Sports Rules shall govern all Special Olympics flag football competitions. Special Olympics has created these rules based upon the National Football League's Air It Out flag football rules which will be the National Governing Body (NGB). The National Football League's Air It Out flag football rules shall be employed in local competitions except when either is in conflict with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules. In such cases, the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules shall apply.

A. Events offered by Special Olympics Missouri

- 1) Traditional Team Competition
- 2) Unified Sports® Team Competition

B. Uniform Specifications

- 1) All participants must have a playing uniform consisting of matching shirts with numbers on front and back which can be tucked in at the waist.
- 2) No jewelry may be worn (rings, bracelets, necklaces, earrings, etc.).
- 3) **No blue jeans will be allowed.**
- 4) Players must wear rubber-cleated or flat-soled athletic shoes. Metal cleats, spikes, hiking boots or other equipment deemed dangerous by officials will not be allowed.

C. Equipment

- 1) An intermediate (youth) size football will be used in all divisions.
- 2) A protective mouthpiece must be worn at all times.
- 3) A one piece three flag belt will be worn during the game.

D. Points of Emphasis

- 1) No team shall repeatedly commit fouls which halve the distance to the goal line.
- 2) Neither team shall commit any act which, in the opinion of the referee, tends to make a travesty of the game. This includes intentionally committing fouls to gain an advantage.
- 3) The referee will enforce any penalty he/she considers equitable, including the award of a score for an unfair act.

E. General Rules

- 1) Special Olympics Flag Football is non-contact. In all aspects of Special Olympics Flag Football, rulings shall be made with player safety as the primary consideration.
- 2) The team roster may contain a maximum of 10 players.
- 3) Teams shall field 5 players to start the game (required). Teams may continue with a minimum of 4 players, if necessary due to disqualification or injury.

- 4) Teams will be grouped in divisions based on a classification round of games.

F. Scoring

- 1) Touchdown: 6 points
- 2) Extra Point: 1 point (from the 5-yard line), 2 points (from the 10-yard line)
- 3) Safety: 2 points

G. Timing

- 1) The game shall consist of two 20-minute halves (running time).
- 2) Officials can stop the clock at their discretion (injuries, delays).
- 3) Each team receives one 60 second time-out per half. An unused time-out in the first half does not carry over to the second half.
- 4) There shall be a 5-minute break at halftime.

H. Coin Toss

- 1) A coin toss determines first possession.
- 2) Each team will provide two captains.
- 3) The officials and team captains will meet 3 minutes prior to the start of the contest to conduct the coin toss.
- 4) The winner of the coin toss will choose offense, defense or end of field to defend. The team winning the coin toss may defer its choice to the second half.

I. Possessions

- 1) All possessions, except following an interception, start at the offensive team's 5-yard line.
- 2) The offense has 4 plays to cross mid-field.
- 3) Once the offense crosses mid-field, they have 4 additional plays to score a touchdown.
- 4) If the offensive team fails to cross mid-field or score a touchdown in the prescribed number of plays, possession of the ball changes and the opposite team starts at their 5-yard line.
- 5) Interceptions change possession of the ball at the spot of the interception. A ball intercepted in the end zone is spotted at the 5-yard line.
- 6) Each time the ball is spotted (marked ready for play by the official) the team has 30 seconds to snap the ball.

J. Positions / Snap

- 1) The ball must be snapped between the legs to start each play.
- 2) No minimum number of players is required to line up on the line of scrimmage.

K. Rushing the QB

- 1) All players that rush the quarterback must be a minimum of 5 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. A special marker, placed by the official, will designate the spot 5 yards from the line of scrimmage.
- 2) Players not rushing the quarterback may defend the line of scrimmage.
- 3) Once the quarterback hands off the ball, the 5-yard zone no longer exists, and all defenders are eligible to rush.

L. Running

- 1) The Quarterback (player receiving the snap) CANNOT run the ball.
- 2) Only direct hand-offs behind the line of scrimmage are legal. Laterals or pitches of any kind are not allowed.
- 3) The player who takes a hand-off can pass the ball, as long as he/she does not pass the line of scrimmage.
- 4) "No Running Zones" are located 5 yards before the mid-field line and goal line. Any ball snapped from these zones must be passed. The purpose of "No Running Zones" is to avoid short yardage power running situations.
- 5) The ball carrier may not spin, dive, hurdle or use either arm to shield a defender from grasping his/her flag.
- 6) The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's belt is when the flag is pulled.

M. Passing and Receiving

- 1) All passes must be forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage.
- 2) All players are eligible to receive a forward pass, including the quarterback if he/she has legally handed-off. Exception: In Unified Sports® divisions, if a Partner throws a pass, only Athletes are eligible receivers.
- 3) Only one player is allowed in motion at the snap and he/she may not be moving toward the line of scrimmage at the snap.
- 4) A player must have at least one foot in bounds when making a catch.
- 5) Interceptions change possession of the ball at the point of the interception. (Exception: A ball intercepted in the end zone is spotted at the 5-yard line).

N. Dead Balls / Fumbles

- 1) There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where it hits the ground.
- 2) Play is ruled dead when:
 - a. the ball carrier's flag is pulled
 - b. the ball carrier loses his/her flag
 - c. the ball carrier steps out of bounds
 - d. the ball carrier's knee or hand touches the ground
 - e. a touchdown, extra point, or safety is scored
 - f. when during a try-for-point the defense obtains possession of the ball
 - g. when a forward pass strikes the ground or is caught simultaneously by opposing players (the offensive retains possession)
 - h. a pass is intercepted (no returns)
 - i. a receiver catches a ball without his/her flags attached
 - j. a snapped ball touches the ground
 - k. when there is an inadvertent whistle

O. Penalties

- 1) All penalties are assessed from the line of scrimmage.
- 2) No penalty may take the ball more than half the distance to the offender's goal line.
- 3) All penalties are automatically accepted. (no declination)
- 4) Sportsmanship / Roughing: The officials will disqualify any player who participates in rough or unsportsmanlike play. No warning is required.
- 5) Offense: 10 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down

- a. Illegal motion (more than 1 player moving at snap, moving forward at snap)
- b. Offside (in neutral zone at snap, false start)
- c. Illegal forward pass (not beyond line of scrimmage; Partner to Partner)
- d. Pass Interference (picking or pushing defender)
- e. Illegal Contact (holding, blocking, bumping)
- f. Flag Guarding (driving, warding off)
- g. Delay of Game (failing to snap within 30 seconds of ready)

6) Defense: 10 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down

- a. Offside (in or beyond neutral zone at snap)
- b. Pass Interference
 - c. Illegal Contact (holding, blocking, bumping)
- d. Illegal Flag Pull (before receiver has ball)
- e. Illegal Rushing (rushing quarterback inside 5-yard limit)

P. Overtime: If the score is tied at the end of regulation play

- 1) A coin toss is held to determine first possession.
- 2) Each team receives one play from its own 5-yard line.
- 3) The team gaining the most yards is awarded 1 extra point and wins the game. If both teams score a touchdown, or gain the same yardage, the procedure is repeated until one team wins.

Q. Unified Sports® Teams

- 1) The roster shall contain a proportionate number of Athletes and Partners.
- 2) During competition, the line-up shall never exceed 3 Athletes and 2 Partners at any time. Failure to adhere to the required ratio results in a forfeit.
- 3) Each team shall have an adult non-playing coach responsible for the line-up and conduct of the team during competition.

R. Supplement to the Rules

- 1) Delay of the Game: The ball must be put in play promptly and legally and any action or lack of action by either team that tends to prevent this is considered a delay of the game. This includes:
 - a. Interrupting the 30-second count for any reason except for a granted time-out.
 - b. Consuming more than 30 seconds to snap the ball after it is ready for play.
 - c. Failing to remove an injured player for whose benefit an excess time-out has been granted.
 - d. Deliberately advancing the ball after it has been declared dead.
- 2) Diving: a defensive or offensive player may dive to catch a pass, however, diving is illegal when used to down a player or advance a ball. A player cannot dive in an attempt to gain extra yardage. The team will be penalized accordingly.
- 3) Eligible Receiver: All offensive players are eligible to receive a pass, except in Unified Sports® divisions where Partners are ineligible when Partners are throwing the pass. Unified Sports® teams are expected to comply with this rule without intervention by officials. Failure to “self- patrol” will be considered unsportsmanlike, and will be penalized accordingly.
- 4) False Start: No member of the offensive team may simulate the start of the play before the ball is snapped.
- 5) Handing the Ball: Handing the ball is transferring player possession from one teammate to another without throwing or kicking it. A ball carrier may hand the ball backward at any time. No forward hand-offs are allowed. (Illegal pass)

- 6) Hurdling: Jumping over or attempting to jump over a player, by the ball carrier, to prevent from being downed or to gain additional yardage is illegal. (Note: Jumping over a player who is on the ground to avoid injury, by official's judgment, is legal.)
- 7) Inadvertent Whistle: In case of an inadvertent whistle the team in possession of the ball may choose to accept the result of the play at the point where the play was blown dead or choose to re-play the down.
- 8) Line of Scrimmage: The line of scrimmage for each team is a vertical plane through the point of the ball nearest the team's goal line. Each player on a team must be on its side of the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped.
- 9) Motion: Only one player of the offensive team may be in motion at the snap. This player must be behind the quarterback and not moving toward its goal line at the time the ball is snapped. If the player comes to a stop, he/she must be set for one second.
- 10) Screen Blocking: Legally obstructing an opponent without contacting him/her with any part of the screen blocker's body. The screen blocker shall have his/her arms fully extended to the ground (below the waist) either at his/her side, in front, or behind his/her back. Any use of arms, elbows, or legs to initiate contact during the screen block is illegal. A player must be on his/her feet before, during and after screen blocking. Screen blocking is the only form of legal blocking that can be used by any player at any time.
 - a. The screen blocker must give an opponent at least one step if opponent has his/her back to blocker.
 - b. The screen blocker must not initiate contact with opponent.
 - c. The screen blocker may not take a position so close to a moving opponent that this opponent cannot avoid contact by stopping or changing directions.
 - d. After a screen blocker has taken his/her legal screening position, the blocker may move laterally or backward to maintain the block.Note: If any of the above provisions are violated, and contact results, the screener has committed an illegal block.
- 11) Shielding (Flag Guarding): Runners shall not flag guard by using their hands, arms, or the ball to deny the opportunity for opponent to pull or remove their flag belt. This includes:
 - a. Swinging the hand or arm over the flag belt
 - b. Placing the ball in possession over the flag belt
 - c. Lowering the shoulders or arm over the flag belt
- 12) Shift: A shift is the action of one or more offensive players who after taking set positions move to a new position prior to the snap. A player who shifts must reset for one second prior to the snap.
- 13) Snap: A snap is the legal act of passing the ball through the legs from the ground to the quarterback to start a play.
- 14) Substitution: Any player on the roster may enter upon the completion of a play (when the ball is dead). Each substitute must play at least one down prior to being replaced. A replaced player must leave the field immediately.

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Flag Football Roster Form:

<https://somo.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/FFB-Roster.pdf>

Universal Sports Rules

Competition Uniforms

General – this does not include sport specific competition uniform rules.

Athletes may wear

Shorts

- Running Shorts
- Basketball Shorts
- Biker Shorts
- Sweatpants
- Jogging Pants

Shirts

- T-shirts
- Tank Tops
- Sweatshirts

Footwear

- Athletic Shoes
- Tennis Shoes
- Basketball Shoes
- Running Shoes
- Cross-Trainers

Athletes may NOT wear

Shorts

- Denim Slacks or Shorts
- Casual Wear
- Dress Slacks or Shorts
- Tennis Shorts
- Any Pants or Shorts with Buttons and/or Zippers

Shirts

- Button-down Casual Shirts
- Golf Shirts
- Shirts with Collars

Footwear

- Hard-soled Shoes
- Sandals
- Hiking Boot Style

1. Athletes may NOT wear medals or ribbons during competition.
2. Athletes may NOT wear any jewelry while competing except Medic Alert necklaces or bracelets. The Medic Alert necklace or bracelet MUST be taped down during competition.

Competition Rules – Team

1. Any team that forfeits a game due to lack of equipment and/or uniforms shall be disqualified for the remainder of the tournament unless they correct the issue prior to their next game. The team may receive Participation Ribbons, but only if they continue to compete during the remainder of the tournament.
2. If a team forfeits due to lack of players, they may still compete later in that tournament if other athletes from their roster arrive before their next scheduled competition. The team will still be qualified for whatever placements they have earned.
3. If a team is late for a game and thus forfeits, that team shall still be eligible to continue play in the rest of that tournament.
4. Special Olympics Missouri will add a 40+ Age Division in all team sports. A team may have no more than 20% of their roster under the age of 40 to be in this division, and any player under the age of 40 may not be a “dominant player”.
5. All teams MUST attend an area competition as well as a Regional competition (if offered) in order to be eligible for state competition. In Basketball Teams must, also, compete in Regionals.
6. Teams may be composed of players from different agencies or even different areas however they must practice together.
7. There shall be a minimum of 2 Unified Partners for ALL teams with the. Unified Partners may never exceed the ratio of Athletes to Unified Partners.
8. All coaches are STRONGLY URGED to play all of their athletes equally regardless of their ability for both divisioning and competition.
9. Face Painting will NOT be allowed at any Competition Event. Arm, hand, etc. Painting is acceptable but not recommended.
10. Alternates for female teams MUST be female or the team will be divisioned as a Male team.

Physical Procedures

- All athletes must complete a physical and release prior to starting practices.
- **Physicals** are good for **THREE** years from the date issued. (physician's signature date)
- Physicals must be submitted to the area office by the established deadline. It is preferable, they be sent as soon as you receive them. This ensures that there is enough time to get them entered into GMS through the SOMO Headquarters Office.
- You are required to keep a copy for your records and bring them with you to area, regional and/or state competitions.
- **CHECK** physicals to make sure all required fields are filled out and on the correct SOMO form. This will expedite the process, because ALL physicals missing any of this information will be returned to you for completion.

Required Fields include:

- First & Last Name legible (**ONLY** use legal names)
- Agency Name and Agency #
- Complete address (city, state and zip)
- Gender
- Birth Date
- Parent/Guardian/Emergency Contact and phone number
- Health History **MUST** be completed
- Signature of parent/caregiver/adult athlete
- Physical Examination completed or physician's form can be attached
- Doctor's Signature & Date
- New athletes will need the Official Special Olympics Release form completed with athlete name, signed and dated

If athlete has Down Syndrome please make sure the X-ray date is on the physical and that the Atlanto-Axial Instability form is completed.

Please make sure that if an athlete has Autism that it is noted on the physical by either checking the box, or noted in the notes portion of the physical.

- If you have questions contact Jesse Williams at jwilliams@somo.org

Please use the most current version of all physical and release forms that are available at <https://somo.org/compete/>

Coaches Check List for Events

Coaches Check List for Area Events:

- Coaches Packet reviewed – put due dates and event date/location on calendar
- Read sports rules: <https://somo.org/sports/> – contact area program manager with any questions
- Certification for all coaches completed – including sports specific quiz
- Practice schedule set
- Complete skills assessments and qualifying scores in the first few practices for your roster submission
- Communicate with families (practices, expectations, code of conduct and competition date & location)
- Engage other volunteers/parents to assist you as needed
- Physicals and releases for NEW athletes submitted: Deadline (in packet) _____
- Updated physicals for athletes with expired physicals submitted: Deadline (in packet) _____
- Unified Partners form and Class A's submitted: Deadline (in packet) _____
- Class A's for coaches, chaperones, team volunteers submitted: Deadline (in packet) _____
- Rosters submitted: Deadline (in packet) _____
- Buddy List (if applicable) submitted: Deadline (in packet) _____
- Info Sheet submitted: Deadline (in packet) _____
- If an athlete or Unified Partner is under age 18 competing with a team that is in Master/Sr. Master, they will need to complete a Master's Division Release form and submit it to your Area Program Staff.
- Team travel arrangements made
- Communicate with families (event schedule, competition attire, bring a water bottle, lunch/money if needed, review the code of conduct and any info they need to know such as bus departure/return times)
- Determine if team/athletes will advance to regional/state competition and provide information to area program manager
- Copies of physicals in notebook or on google drive to take to event
- Supplies to take: uniforms, sports equipment, first aid kit, medications, sunscreen, blankets, snacks, water, team tent, etc.

Day of Event:

- Physicals Notebook – must have these at the event!
- Load supplies needed
- Depart on time
- Check in at coaches table upon arrival and turn in scratches
- Enjoy the day and be a great role model for all athletes

Post Event if not advancing to regional/state:

- Submit all coaches hours at <https://form.jotform.com/70874730826160>
- Provide feedback to your area program manager about the event
- Thank your school administrators, volunteers and parents
- If you do awards banquets/recognition be sure to get medal placement, scores, etc. from athletes or your team volunteers
- **Celebrate your team/athletes success and YOUR Success!**

Coaches Checklist (if advancing to regional/state):

- Review physical list for any expiring before the next competition (all expiring physicals MUST be submitted 2 weeks prior to event)
- Visit to find additional event details on State Events - <https://somo.org/competitions/>
- Review the Coaches Handbook prior to the event for details
- Check ID Badges – submit photos for new athletes to program manager
- Confirm athlete/UP attendance with Area Program Manager
- Engage other volunteers/parents to assist you as needed
- Class A forms submitted: Deadline _____
- Complete JOT form: Deadline _____
- Make travel arrangements
- Download the mobile app to receive updates throughout the event
- Communicate with families on event details families (event schedule, competition attire, bring a water bottle, lunch if needed, items to pack, review the code of conduct, how families can download the mobile app to get information throughout the weekend and info they need to know such as bus departure/return times)
- If this is your first time attending a Regional or State event, contact your Area Program Manager and we can connect you with a “seasoned” coach if you would like!
- Attend the coaches meeting so you can have current information
- Pick up your coaches packet at designated time/location
- Encourage your athletes to attend the Healthy Athlete Screenings if available (these are FREE)
- Enjoy the event and be a great role model for all athletes

End of Season

- Submit all coaches hours at <https://form.jotform.com/70874730826160>
- Provide feedback to your area program manager about the event
- Thank your school administrators, volunteers and parents
- If you do awards banquets/recognition be sure to get medal placement, scores, etc. from athletes or your team volunteers
- **Celebrate your team/athletes success and YOUR Success!**

Other helpful tips for organization:

- Save your physicals and **all forms** on a google drive so you can access them at any time and this allows other coaches to access to them. This is helpful in the event your teams are playing in different locations or are traveling at different times. You can also keep your coaches and chaperones contact info on the drive. Some teams set up folders by sports in the google drive and add each athlete and all paperwork relevant to that sport. Then share the folder with the coaches for that sport.
- If your team plans on attending Regional and State events, take a photo of the new athlete/unified partner when they submit their paperwork. You will not have to track them down for that later and you can send it to your Area Program Staff so they can get the ID badge made in advance of the event.

Special Olympics Missouri Flag Football Roster

Team Name: _____

Agency Name & Code: _____ Area: _____

Mailing Address: _____ City & Zip: _____

Head Coach Name & Phone: _____ () _____

Assistant Coach Name & Phone: _____ () _____

Please designate with a check mark (✓)

Event Competing in: CHECK ONE

Regulation Flag Football _____

(Maximum 12 players)

Unified Sports® Flag Football _____

(Maximum 12 players)

Age Group: CHECK ONE

Juniors (8 – 15) _____

Seniors (16 – 21) _____

Masters (22 - 39) _____

Sex: CHECK ONE

Male _____

Female _____

State: Y or N

ROSTER

Player's Name	Athlete or UP?
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

**Turn this roster in on the DAY of the tournament
at coaches check-in.**

