

FLAG FOOTBALL

2011 GENERAL RULES

The Official Special Olympics Wisconsin Sports Rules shall govern all Special Olympics Wisconsin Flag Football competitions. As an international sports program, Special Olympics Wisconsin has developed these rules based upon Special Olympics International and Special Olympics North America's rules utilized during National and World level competitions for Flag Football. Website: www.specialolympicswisconsin.org

OFFICIAL EVENTS OFFERED

1. Team Competition
2. Unified Sports® Team Competition – Invitational only

SECTION A – GENERAL RULES

1. In cases not specifically covered by these rules, the National Football League's Air It Out Flag Football rules will govern play.
2. 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.
3. Protests will only be considered for rule infractions (not for referee judgments).
4. The games rules committee shall make all final judgments.

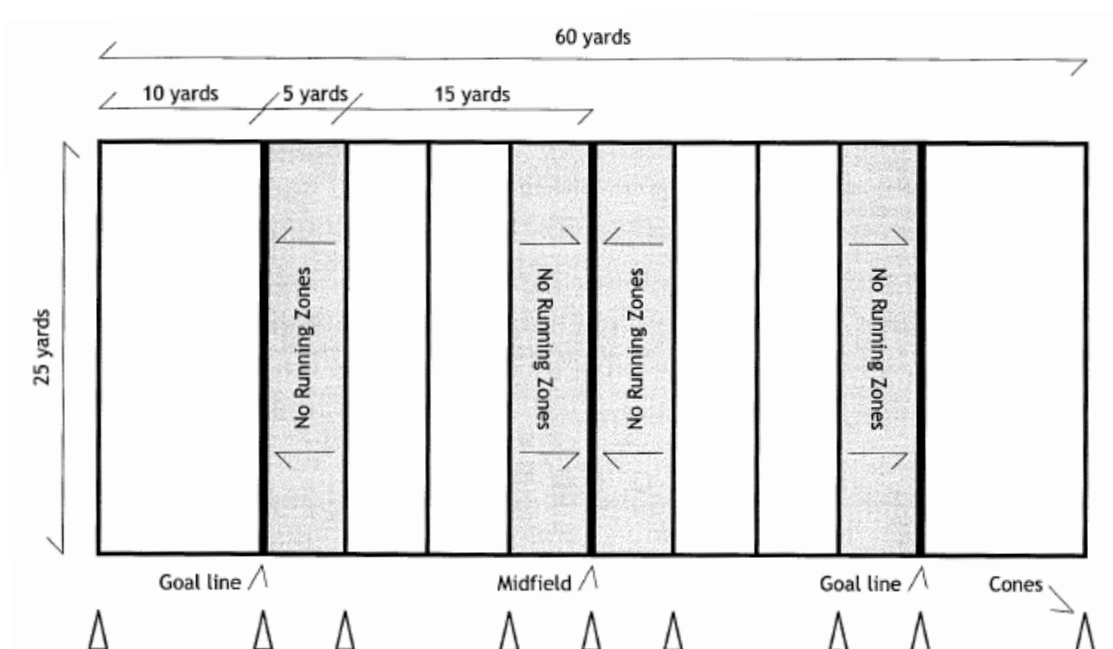
Teams must play a minimum of two (documented) games against other Special Olympics teams prior to registration for district competition (unified teams must play unified teams). The team roster must remain the same for the two qualifying games, district competition and State competition. Teams that modify their rosters will forfeit all games. Qualifying games must be played against other teams with an Intent to Play form on file. **One game must be played against a team from another agency.**

SECTION B – DIVISIONING

1. All teams will play in co-ed open divisions.

SECTION C - FIELD

The playing field measures 60 yards long (including the end zones) and 25 yards wide. A space of at least 10 yards around the field must be free and clear of obstructions. The field can be marked with paint of a visible color, and pylons/cones.



SECTION D – EQUIPMENT

1. An intermediate (youth) size football will be used in all divisions. Leather, synthetic leather, or rubber footballs are appropriate for use in training and competition. The ball should be properly inflated and inspected periodically for defects or damage. Nerf footballs may be used in training to assist athletes who are having difficulty catching the ball, but will not be used in competition.
2. All players must wear a protective mouthpiece during training and competition.
3. Steel spikes, street shoes and jewelry are not allowed. Gym, tennis, running or rubber spike shoes will be allowed.
4. A one-piece, three-flag belt is the required flag belt for competition.
5. Players with illegal uniforms will not be allowed to play. Players with non-matching uniforms will be penalized accordingly. Legality of a uniform may be determined by the referee or by the event coordinator. Proper uniforms and uniform numbering will be enforced! Individuals who do not adhere to uniform regulations will not be allowed to enter a game. All players on a team must wear uniforms (shirt and pants) that are identical in color, trim, style and material. An Arabic number of contrasting color at least six inches high must be worn on the back of all uniform shirts. Taped numbers on pinnies are not legal in SOWI competition. All uniform shirts must be tucked in at the waist. All players' pants shall be either all long or all short in style and may not have pockets. If this must vary due to health or religious reasons, a special needs form must be completed upon registration. No cut-off shorts or denim jeans are allowed. Hats (baseball style caps or caps with hard visor) may not be worn. Receiver's gloves may be worn. Athletes wearing improper uniforms will not be allowed to participate. No jewelry is allowed.

7. Flag belts (as described in equipment section) must be worn by all players **at all times** as part of the uniform. In addition, any player that **intentionally** wears their flag belt improperly (tied) while in play will be penalized.

SECTION E – OFFICIALS AND THEIR DUTIES

1. Officials will conduct the games in accordance to specified rules.
2. Local, Area, District and State competitions should utilize WIAA certified officials when possible.
3. Officials shall have full authority to interpret rules. For further questions, the tournament rules committee shall be consulted.
4. Officials shall have the power to make all decisions on any points not specifically covered in the rules.
5. In case of injury, equipment repair, or unsafe playing conditions, the official shall stop play but time does not stop for any reason unless the official considers it to be excessive. The decision to stop time is at the official's discretion. Time will be stopped for time outs.
6. The official may call a game completed (for darkness or weather) at any time.

SECTION F – PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTES

1. Each team will consist of a minimum of 5 and maximum of 12 players on the roster in order to be eligible to be registered for competition.
2. 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.
3. Substitutions may be made anytime the ball is dead.
4. Once a player has entered the field of play as a substitution, they must remain in the game for at least one play before being replaced.

SECTION G – THE GAME

1. A regulation game shall consist of two 20-minute halves (running time), with a 5-minute halftime.
2. 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. The clock will stop for time outs.
3. All line-up cards must be presented to the official scorekeeper 10 minutes before the start of any game.
4. The first possession shall be decided by a coin toss at the beginning of the game. The winner of the coin toss will choose offense, defense or end of field to defend. The team winning to coin toss may defer its choice to the second half.

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

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 designated 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.
7. The ball is marked at the spot where the position of the ball is when the player is declared down (carrier's flag belt is pulled or hand/knee touches ground).

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.

RUSHING THE QB

1. All players that rush the quarterback must be 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.

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 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 marked at the spot where the position of the ball is when the player is declared down (carrier's flag belt is pulled or hand/knee touches ground).

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 the ball off.
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. A ball intercepted in the end zone is spotted at the 5 yard line.

DEAD BALL/FUMBLES

1. There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where it hits the ground. If the ball is fumbled forward, it will be spotted where it left the players possession. The team with possession of the ball retains possession on all fumbles.
2. Play is ruled dead when:
 - The ball carrier's flag is pulled
 - The ball carrier loses his/her flag belt
 - The ball carrier steps out of bounds
 - The ball carrier's knee or hand touches the ground
 - A touchdown, extra point, or safety is scored
 - When the defense obtains possession of the ball
 - When a forward pass strikes the ground or is caught simultaneously by opposing players (the offense retains possession)
 - A pass is intercepted (no returns)
 - A receiver catches a ball without his/her flags attached
 - A snapped ball touches the ground
 - Any inadvertent whistle.

PENALTIES

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

- Illegal motion (more than 1 player moving at snap, moving forward at snap)
 - Offside (in neutral zone at snap, false start)
 - Illegal forward pass (not beyond line of scrimmage)
 - Pass Interference (picking or pushing defender)
 - Illegal contact (holding, blocking, bumping)
 - Flag Guarding (diving, spinning, blocking flag, stiff arms)
 - Delay of Game (failing to snap within 30 seconds of ball placement)
 - Diving to advance the ball or gain an advantage
 - Quarterback running the ball
 - Running the ball in the no running zones
 - Too many players on the field
7. Defense: 10 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
- Offside (in or beyond neutral zone at snap)
 - Pass Interference
 - Illegal contact (holding, blocking, bumping)
 - Illegal flag pull (before receiver has ball)
 - Illegal rushing (rushing quarterback inside 5 yard limit)
 - Too many players on the field

OVERTIME

1. A coin toss is held to determine first possession.
2. Each team receives two (2) plays from midfield and the team gaining the most points or gaining a yardage advantage is awarded one (1) extra point and wins the game.
3. Exceptions to this rule are as follows:
 - a) Interception: The team that intercepts the pass automatically wins the game.
 - b) If the team with the first attempt in overtime scores on the first play, the opposing team must score on its first play also.
 - c) If both teams score a touchdown, or gain the same yardage, the procedure is repeated until one (1) team wins.

SECTION H – 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:
 - Interrupting the 30-second count for any reason except for a granted time-out.
 - Consuming more than 30 seconds to snap the ball after it is ready for play.
 - Failing to remove an injured player for whose benefit an excess time-out has been granted.
 - 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.

- 4. False Start:** No member of the offensive team may simulate the start of the play before the ball is snapped.
- 5. Hand-offs:** Handing the ball off is transferring player possession from one teammate to another without throwing or kicking it. All hand-offs must be behind the line of scrimmage. 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 replay 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. He/she may also cross the arms across the chest.
 - 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.
 - If any of the provisions listed are violated, and contact results, the screener has committed an illegal block.
 - The screen blocker must give an opponent at least one step if opponent has his/her back to blocker.
 - The screen blocker must not initiate contact with opponent.
 - 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.After the snap of the ball, a blocker may move laterally or backward two (2) steps.
- 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:
- Swinging the hand or arm over the flag belt

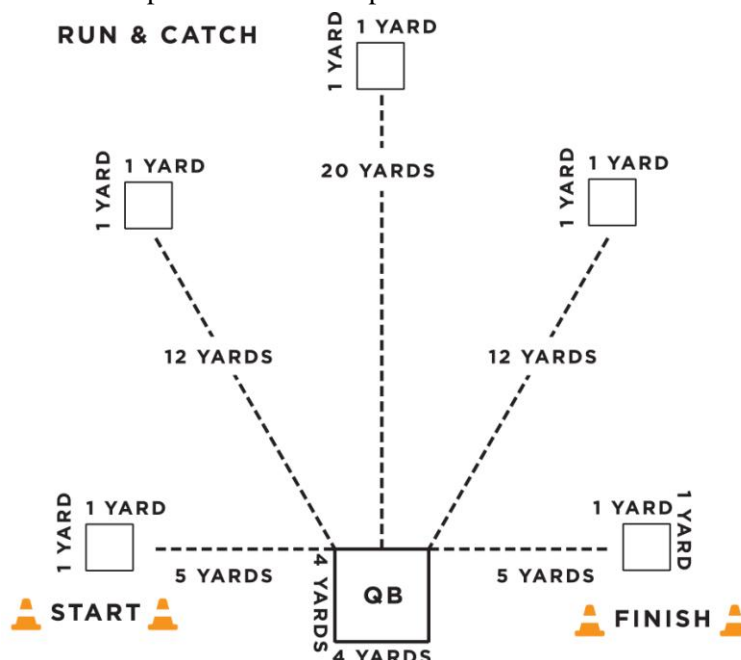
- Placing the ball in possession over the flag belt
- Lowering the shoulders or arm over the flag belt
- Stiff arming the defense

- 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.

Flag Football Individual Skills Assessment Test

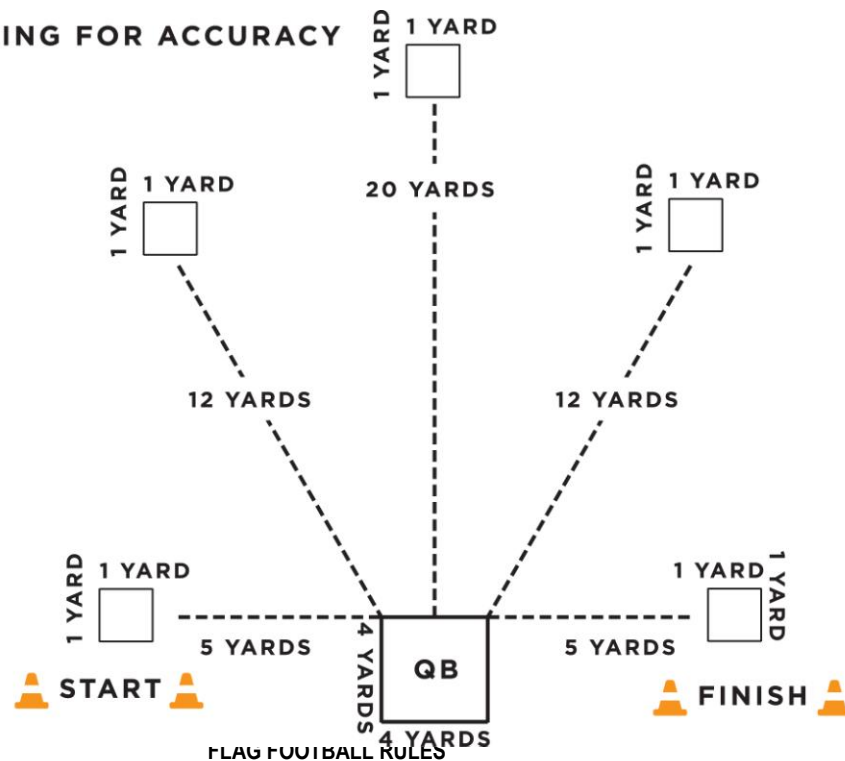
Catching: “Run & Catch”

- Purpose:** To measure athlete’s ability to catch a football.
- Equipment:** 5 footballs, measuring tape, field paint, 28 cones, or numbered mats to mark catching spots and start/finish lines.
- Description:** A starting line, finish line, quarterback box, and 5 catching spots should be marked/ placed on the field. The catching spots should be marked 1-5 (left to right).
 - The quarterback box should be placed in between the starting and finish line.
 - The quarterback box will be 4 yards X 4 yards.
 - Catching spots are 1 yard X 1 yard.
 - Catching Boxes 1 & 5 will be 5 yards from the quarterback box.
 - Catching Boxes 2 & 4 will be 12 yards from the quarterback box.
 - Catching Box 3 will be 20 yards from the quarterback box.
 - The starting line should be placed on the left side of the quarterback and the finish line should be placed on the right side of the quarterback. Athletes will start to the left of the quarterback and finish on the right side of the quarterback.
 - Each athlete will begin at the starting line. Once the official quarterback gives the signal, the athlete must run to each catching box (in numerical order), stopping to catch a pass at each spot. Once the ball is completely caught, the athlete drops the ball and goes to the next catching box. Once the last ball is caught, the athlete will sprint through the finish line. If a throw from the QB is deemed inaccurate, athletes will receive an additional throw from the same spot.
- Scoring:** Athletes will receive points for completing catches.
 - 2 pts: for a complete catch (clearly caught with both hands)
 - 0 pts: if athlete is unable to catch or touch a well-thrown pass.
 - Athletes can gain a maximum of 10 points in this drill.
 - Officials will be present to confirm point total.



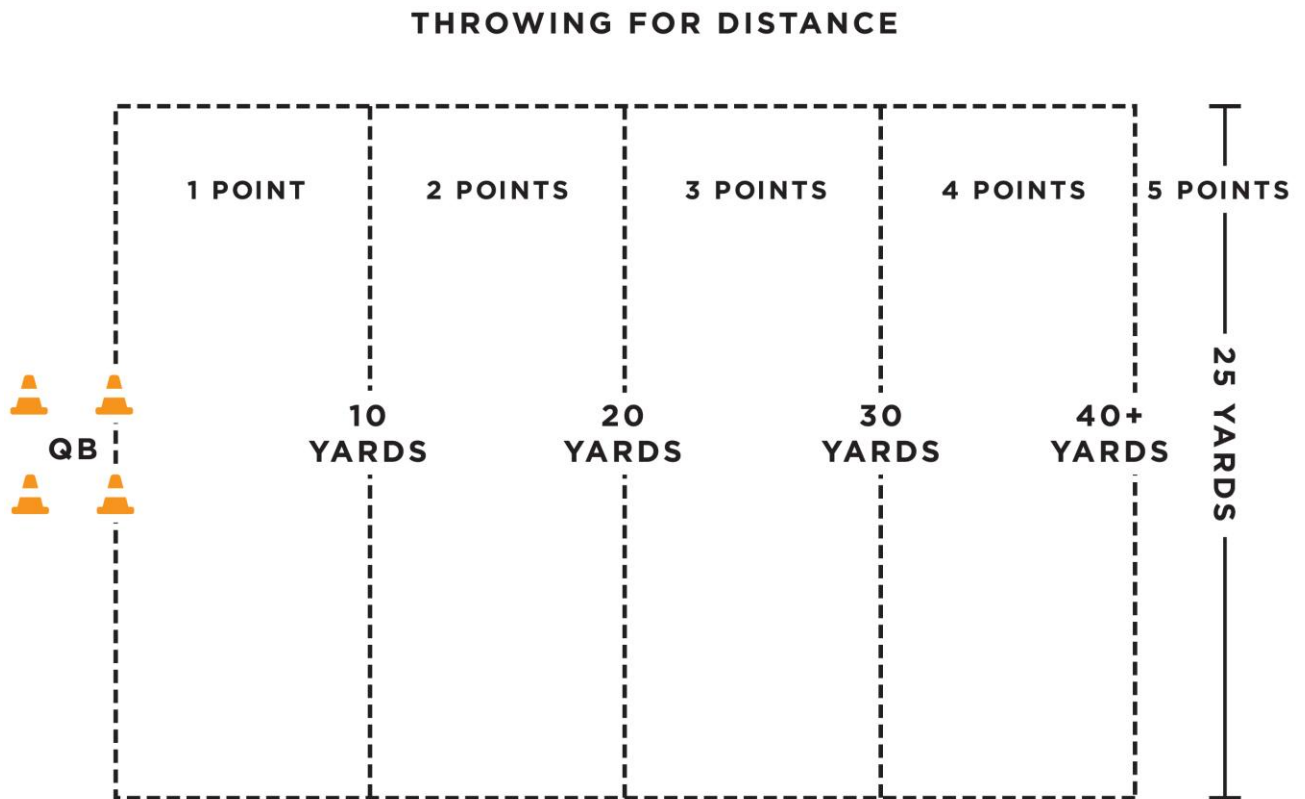
Throwing for Accuracy

- 1. Purpose:** To measure the athlete's ability to throw a football accurately.
- 2. Equipment:** 5 footballs, measuring tape, field paint, 28 cones, or numbered mats to mark catching spots and start/finish lines.
- 3. Description:** A starting line, finish line, quarterback box, and 5 catching boxes should be marked/ placed on the field. The catching boxes should be marked 1-5 (left to right).
 - The quarterback box should be placed in between the starting and finish line.
 - The quarterback box should be placed in between the starting and finish line.
 - The quarterback box will be 4 yards X 4 yards.
 - Catching spots are 1 yard X 1 yard.
 - Catching Boxes 1 & 5 will be 5 yard from the quarterback box.
 - Catching Boxes 2 & 4 will be 12 yards from the quarterback box.
 - Catching Box 3 will be 20 yards from the quarterback box.
 - The starting line should be placed on the left side of the quarterback and the finish line should be placed on the right side of the quarterback.
 - The player being tested stands inside of the quarterback box. Five human targets/volunteers are placed in each catching spot. The athlete must throw to each target (in numerical order), gaining points for completed passes. The receiver must stay in the catching box. Scoring is based on accuracy of the throw not on the volunteer catching the pass.
- 4. Scoring:** Athletes will receive points for completed passes.
 - 2 pts: For an accurate & completed throw.
 - 0 pts: Receiver is unable to catch or touch ball in targeted area. If the ball hits the ground prior to reaching the target, the throw will be recorded as a failed attempt.
 - Athletes can gain a maximum of 10 points in this drill.



Throwing for Distance

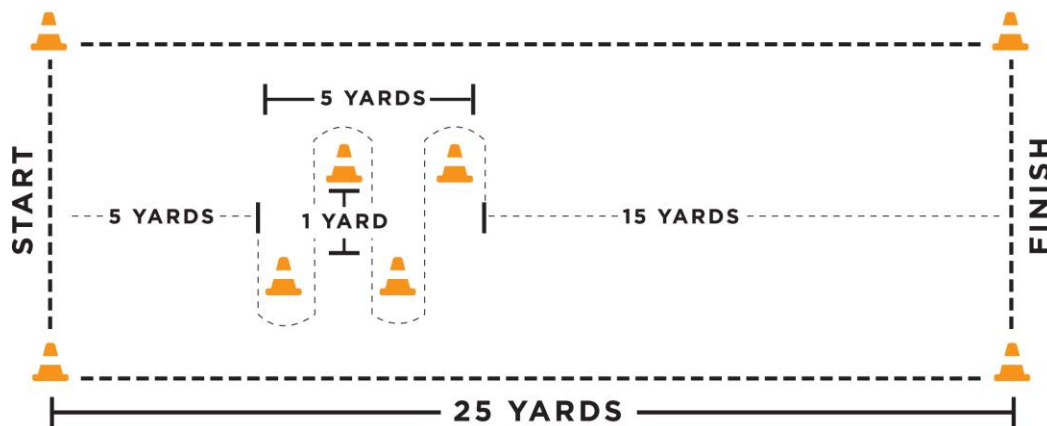
- 1. Purpose:** To measure the athlete's ability to throw a football for distance.
- 2. Equipment:** 3-5 footballs; measuring tape; field paint; 4 cones
- 3. Description:** Athlete gets two attempts to throw football as far as possible. The goal line of a Special Olympics flag football field can be used as the starting line.
- 4. Scoring:** Athletes will receive a maximum of 5 points per throw.
 - 1 pt: 0-10 yards
 - 2 pt: 10-20 yards
 - 3 pt: 20-30 yards
 - 4 pts: 30-40 yards
 - 5 pts: 40+ yards
 - Athletes can gain a maximum of 10 points in this drill.



Agility & Speed: Hand-Off

1. **Purpose:** To measure the athlete's speed, agility and ability to receive a hand-off.
2. **Equipment:** 3 footballs, 8 cones, field paint, measuring tape, and stop watch
3. **Description:** The ball is marked at the 20 yard line or 20 yards from the goal line. The quarterback will be position 20 yards from the goal line. Athlete begins 5 yards behind the quarterback and between the cones.
 - The quarterback will give the signal and hand the ball off to the athlete.
 - The clock will start on the quarterbacks signal.
 - The athlete must maneuver around the four cones and sprints to the finish line/endzone between the cones and must maintain possession of the football.
 - Each cone will be 1.25 yards apart
 - A fumble at the exchange between the QB and the athlete would be a redo.
 - If an athlete losses control of the ball, the clock continues to run. The athlete can recover the ball. However, if the ball goes outside the 3m lane, the athlete can either pick up the nearest back-up football or recover the errant football to continue the event.
4. **Scoring:** The athlete will receive two attempts. The athlete can receive a max of 5 points per attempt for a total of 10 points.
 - The athlete will be timed from QB's signal to when he/she crosses the finish line between the cones with possession of the football.
 - One-second will be added for every missed cone.
 - Conversion Chart will indicate score. Athlete can gain a maximum of 10 points.

AGILITY & SPEED HANDOFF

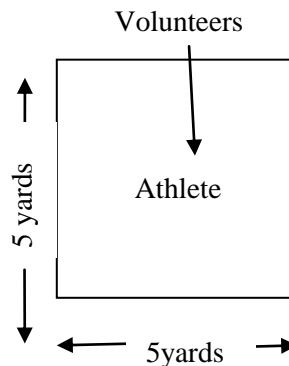


Agility & Speed: Hand-Off Conversion Chart	
Seconds	Points
Under 7.5 seconds	5
7.5-9	4
9.1-10.5	3
10.5-12.0	2
12.1 and over	1

Flag Pulling

1. **Purpose:** To measure the athlete's ability to pull an opponent's flag.
2. **Equipment:** 5 footballs, 4 cones, 5 volunteers and measuring tape
3. **Description:** The athlete stands in the middle of a 5 X 5 yard grid.
 - Volunteers will one at a time jog through the grid with a football and attached flags. The athlete attempts to pull the volunteers flag before the volunteer leaves the grid. Volunteers will move straight through the box without attempting to elude athlete. Speed of volunteers will increase incrementally until the last volunteer is sprinting through.
 - This is not a timed event. Each additional attempt will not start until the athlete has repositioned themselves at the center of the grid.
4. **Scoring:** The athlete will receive 5 attempts
 - The athlete will receive two points for successful flag pull.
 - The athlete will receive one point for any unsuccessful flag pull in which either the flag or ball carrier was touched, but the flag did not come off.
 - The athlete will receive zero points for any unsuccessful flag pull in which the flags or ball carrier are not touched at all.
 - Once the jogging volunteer leaves the grids, he/she must reposition themselves in the center of the grid.
 - Athletes can gain a maximum of 10 points in the drill.

FLAG PULLING



Flag Football Individual Skills Assessment Score Sheet



Special Olympics
Wisconsin

Name _____

Agency _____

Assessment Date _____

Scoring:

- The highest attainable score for each Skill is 10 points.
- Catching: "Run & Catch", Throwing for Accuracy and Flag Pulling will be scored on one attempt each.
- Throwing for Distance and Agility & Speed: Hand-off will be scored on two attempts each. Utilize conversion charts below to determine points for each attempt.
- The FINAL TOTAL is a sum of all total scores.

SKILLS	SCORE	TOTAL
Catching: Run & Catch 2pts for a complete catch	_____ / _____ / _____ / _____ / _____	
Throwing for Accuracy 2pts for an accurate & completed throw	_____ / _____ / _____ / _____ / _____	
Flag Pulling 2pts for successful flag pull 1pt for any unsuccessful flag pull in which the flags or ball carrier was still touched	_____ / _____ / _____ / _____ / _____	
Agility & Speed: Hand-off Use conversion chart below	1 st attempt: _____ / _____ / _____ / _____ / _____ 2 nd attempt: _____ / _____ / _____ / _____ / _____	
Throwing for Distance Use conversion chart below	_____ / _____	
FINAL TOTAL	_____	

CONVERSION CHARTS			
Agility & Speed: Hand-off		Throwing for Distance	
Seconds	Points	Yards	Points
Under 7.5	5	40+ yards	5
7.5-9	4	39-30	4
9.1-10.5	3	29-20	3
10.5-12	2	19-10	2
12.1 and over	1	9-0 yards	1