



**2021 Regina & Saskatoon Flag Rugby
Leagues**

Team & Participant Information Package

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Introduction

Sask Rugby is running flag rugby leagues in Regina and Saskatoon as a means of facilitating Return to Play in the province. It is our goal to provide opportunities for participants to return to rugby in a safe and controlled manner. We want to give you - and your rugby organizations and members - certainty about the league happening and what safety measures will be taken to ensure that the risk of contracting COVID-19 remains low.

We also want to make sure that, for the purposes of growing the overall rugby community, we support non-contact forms of rugby. Non-contact rugby represents an easy entry point to the sport for new participants, a way to keep participating for those who want a less physically-intensive version of the sport, or even as cross-training for participants in outdoor, full-contact rugby activities.

This package outlines the technical and safety details relating to these leagues and is intended to be a comprehensive outline of the structure of the leagues, the safety protocols that will be used, and flag rugby in general.

Any further questions about the contents of this package can be directed to Andrew Shaw, Rugby Development Officer, at rdo@saskrugby.com.

League Information > Time/Date/Location Information

The Sask Rugby flag rugby leagues will take place in Regina and Saskatoon on Saturdays from January 9th until March 27th. Specific time, date, and location information for each facility can be found below.

Regina

January 9 - March 27, 2021

Saturdays, 6pm-9pm

Regina Sports Performance Centre

1464 Broadway Avenue, Regina, SK

Saskatoon

January 9 - March 27, 2021

Saturdays, 9pm-12am

Elite PROformance Centre

335 68th Street East, Saskatoon, SK

Each evening, the time specified above will be divided into sections to facilitate the mini-league structure (see next section) and compliance with COVID-19 regulations. Therefore, teams will not be required to participate in the full three hours of time.

League Information > Mini-League Structure

The Sask Rugby flag rugby leagues will operate within the Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan's guidelines for sports mini-leagues during COVID-19. Under these guidelines, mini-leagues are limited to 50 individuals and represent a "closed circle" of contacts that are participating in a single sport. This structure is designed to limit the number of individual contacts while allowing competitive sport to proceed functionally. Individuals should only be participating in one mini-league at the same time and a 14-day "cooling-off" period must be observed by individuals moving from one mini-league to another. The implications of these rules for flag rugby will be discussed below.

Mini-leagues will be formed for flag rugby to try to ensure an enjoyable experience for all involved (i.e. competitive matches relative to skill level). Considerations will be made for the desired competition level (e.g. competitive vs. social) and age levels of the participants (e.g. U19 vs Senior age categories). The team registrations and rosters for the flag rugby leagues have been capped to allow for up to 4 teams to participate in each mini-league. The final number of teams per mini-league will be determined by the number of teams registered.

Once mini-leagues have been set, these will not change for the duration of the competition unless a 14-day cooling-off period is observed. Since these leagues will be played within a 12-week window that is capped by the registration category used for these events (see [Player Registration](#) section) any cooling-off period would result in losing one week of rugby per cooling-off period. Therefore, a cooling-off period will only be instituted at the request of the participating teams for the purposes of enjoyment of the league. Instances where an individual player needs to transfer teams/mini-leagues will be handled on a case-by-case situation through communication with the Sask Rugby Office.

On a similar note, these mini-league regulations preclude players from participating on multiple teams within separate mini-leagues. Player "swapping" or participation with multiple teams is possible within each mini-league as the teams within each mini-league are part of the "closed circle" of the mini-league and therefore are not increasing the number of individual contacts for the entire group. However, despite this being possible it is recommended that players only play for the team that they register with unless lending players is required to enable a functional game to be played (i.e. Team A only has 4 players available and Team B lends 3 players from their 10 to enable a game to be played). Likewise, an individual who wishes to play for one team and coach another may only do so for teams in the same mini-league.

League Information > Team Registration & Rosters

Teams can register for the flag rugby leagues by filling out a [pre-registration form](#) and completing a team agreement to follow COVID-19 protocols (to be sent directly to teams who complete a pre-registration form). There is no cost associated with registering a team for the leagues. The team pre-registration deadline is December 18, 2020. Rugby organizations such as clubs are not required to become sanctioned for Return to Play to register a team in the flag rugby league.

Teams will be capped at a roster of 12 players to enable up to 4 teams to participate in each mini-league. A minimum of 5 players are required per team (since gameplay is 5v5). It is recommended that teams construct their rosters such that they have 8-10 players available each week as it is not expected that each individual is available for all 12 weeks of the league. Each player on a team's roster must be registered with Rugby Canada as per the [Player Registration](#) section below.

Teams will be required to submit their roster by January 7th (i.e. the Thursday before the first night of league play). Sask Rugby will check these rosters against the list of registered players and ensure that players who are included on rosters are becoming registered before the first matches. Teams will be able to update their roster in subsequent weeks (by the Thursday preceding the games) to add or remove players but players who are removed from the roster may not re-join the roster or the roster of another team unless permitted a transfer by Sask Rugby. In the case of a transfer being allowed to a different mini-league the player will need to observe a 14-day cooling-off period.

Teams that remove players from their roster will not be allowed to replace these players on the roster (i.e. the team will lose a roster spot). This is to prevent mini-leagues from becoming larger than 50 individuals through chopping and changing of rosters. For instance, a single team who changes (removes and replaces) three players on their roster from week 1 to week 2 would effectively expand the mini-league to 51 individuals and subsequent changes or changes by other teams would only make this number larger. Conversely, adding players to a roster if the initial roster has less than 12 players on it does not risk over-expanding the mini-league since the 12 individual limit has been set to ensure that the maximum number of participants stays below 50 even if rosters are full.

League Information > Player Registration

All participants in these flag rugby leagues will need to be registered with Rugby Canada through a 12-week event-specific membership category that will be opened by Sask Rugby in January 2021. These memberships will cost \$40 per person and links to these registrations will be made available at <https://www.saskrugby.com/flag/>.

This registration is completely separate from other Rugby Canada membership categories. Individuals who have active memberships with Rugby Canada will also need to register separately for the flag rugby league. This is required to fit within the COVID-19 regulations surrounding Return to Play and the Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan.

Player registration is scheduled to open on January 4th, 2021. All players must be registered and included on a team roster before their first match. The roster deadlines outlined in the Team Registration & Rosters section above have been scheduled to allow Sask Rugby to follow-up with individuals named on rosters to ensure that they are properly registered. Players must be registered by 4pm each Saturday in order to participate in that evening's games in order to allow the registration to be processed for COVID-19 contact tracing and attendance purposes.

League Information > Refund Policy

Sask Rugby has implemented the following refund policy in the event that some weeks of the league are cancelled due to COVID-19 regulations imposed by the Saskatchewan government. It is Sask Rugby's intention to play as many weeks as possible but rugby will not be played if sporting activities have been deemed unsafe. Refunds will be applied to the registration fees paid by players since there are no team fees for these leagues. The refund policy is as follows:

All 12 weeks cancelled (0 weeks played): 100% refund

7-11 weeks cancelled (1-5 weeks played): 50% refund

0-6 weeks cancelled (at least 6 weeks played): 0% refund

League Information > Standings & Competition

With the formation of mini-leagues, separate standings will be kept for each mini-league. Standings points will be given as follows: 2 points for a win, 1 point for a draw, and 0 points for a loss. Ties in standings points will be decided in order of the following criteria: 1) difference between tries scored and tries conceded, 2) total tries scored, 3) head-to-head record between the tied teams, and 4) try difference in games between the tied teams. Forfeits, where a team is unable to field 5 players, will be scored as a 5-0 victory for the non-forfeiting team.

In the event that a cooling-off period is observed and new mini-leagues are formed, separate standings will be kept for each new mini-league as well as for the entire competition. The same points allocations and tie-breaking criteria will be kept for the competition standings.

Due to COVID and the mini-leagues structure, there will be no final week “championship” round.

League Information > Referee/Scorekeeper Information

In order to keep mini-leagues within the 50-person limit, each team in these leagues will be required to designate two individuals as volunteers for each week of league play. One of these individuals will be the team's designated referee and the other will be the designated scorekeeper. These individuals will take charge of matches in which their team is not participating according to the weekly schedule. These do not need to be the same individual each week. Individuals who have an interest in refereeing full-contact rugby are encouraged to volunteer as their team's designate referee as flag rugby is a great introduction to refereeing and comes without the pressure of learning about the tricks props are trying to play on each other in the scrum (and other complex laws around the contact areas).

No prior training or certification will be required for referees, although previous familiarity with rugby as a player will provide a good foundation for learning the information required to referee flag rugby. Training will be provided by Sask Rugby for volunteer referees to help understand the flag rugby rules from a referee's perspective and the basics of refereeing. One such training session will be held (via Zoom) prior to the first round of matches and any individual who is interested in refereeing is welcome to attend this session. Additional sessions will be held as necessary throughout the league for individuals who were not able to attend the initial session. Electronic whistles will be provided for referee volunteers and will be disinfected between each use (there will be enough whistles for the use to be limited to one individual per week).

Scorekeepers will not require any additional training or equipment. The duties of the scorekeeper will be to tally the score on the provided scoreboard during the match and ensure that the score is recorded by the League Coordinator before the subsequent match. The scorekeeper may be asked to judge touch on one side of the field at the discretion of the referee.

League Information > Flag Rugby Rules

Sask Rugby's flag rugby leagues will be conducted according to the flag rugby rules included in [Appendix 1](#) of this package. These rules have been designed through trial and error to produce a fast, flowing game that mimics many of the skills required for traditional, contact rugby. Some of the basic rules of flag rugby are as follows:

- 5 players per side: each team plays with 5 players on the field at a time and substitutions are allowed at any time
- Backwards passes only: forward passes or fumbles that fall forward will result in a turnover
- Scoring: a try is scored by touching the ball to the ground within the opposing end zone
- 6 tags per possession: the team in possession of the ball has 6 opportunities to score a try – each opportunity ending with a pulled flag – before turning the ball over to the other team (unless an infringement occurs first)
- Offloads are allowed: the ball carrier is allowed a brief window after their flag has been pulled to offload to a teammate without needing to reset for a free pass
- No contact: neither attacking nor defending players should purposefully initiate contact with another player, including fending
- No kicking: players are not allowed to kick the ball
- No guarding of flags: the ball carrier may not fend, block, hide, or guard their flags by any means, including diving or spinning in order to prevent the defender from having access to the flags

COVID-19 Information for Participants

With the health and safety concerns presented by COVID-19 and the ongoing pandemic, all teams and individuals involved in Sask Rugby flag leagues must adhere to league COVID-19 guidelines presented below as well as all public health, government, and facility restrictions and regulations. Team captains must sign an agreement to adhere to all COVID-19 guidelines during team registration and this is accepted by all participants as part of individual registration. Any individual or team found breaching any of these measures will face immediate individual and/or team removal from the league and all rugby activities.

The following are the basic guidelines that participants will be expected to follow. The full COVID-19 Safety Plan will be posted to <https://www.saskrugby.com/flag/> before the first round of matches.

- **Self-monitoring.** All participants should self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms and not attend rugby activities or enter the facilities if feeling unwell. This also goes for individuals who have knowingly been exposed to COVID-19 or travelled to a high-risk area in the past 14 days, even if asymptomatic (not showing symptoms). Individuals in any of these categories should contact the COVID-19 Manager immediately.
- **Daily COVID-19 Attestations and attendance tracking.** All participants will be required to complete an online COVID-19 Daily Attestation before entering the facility prior to each in-person activity. This will double as attendance for league contact tracing but does not replace any facility waivers or entry requirements. Additional measures will be communicated to each league and a link to COVID-19 Daily Attestations will be made available at <https://www.saskrugby.com/flag/>.
- **Masking.** As per public health order, non-medical masks must be worn inside the facility at all times, including on the sidelines and when entering and exiting the facility. Masks can be removed only while actively engaged in physical activity or drinking, but all participants must make an effort to physically distance and limit contact at these times. Coaches and referees who may come into contact with un-masked individuals (i.e. on-field during play) must wear medical masks provided by Sask Rugby during this time.
- **Facility access and use.** Participants may only access the field, washrooms, and water bottle filling stations as per the league COVID-19 Safety Plan. Access to changerooms, weight rooms, showers, and any other non-essential on-site facilities are restricted for flag league participants.
- **Preparing for each session.** Prior to the first session, participants must complete a COVID-19 Self-Assessment, register with Rugby Canada as a player in the league, and review all COVID-19 guidelines from Sask Rugby, public health and government authorities. Additionally, and prior to each subsequent session, participants must complete an online Daily COVID-19 Attestation. Participants should arrive to the facility ready to step onto the field, with the exception of cleats or indoor runners which should be packed and put on at the fields. A water bottle, cleats or runners, and any necessary belongings (car keys, phone, medication) should be packed in a small, clean bag that will only be handled by the individual.

- **Entering and exiting the facility.** Participants should use the hand sanitizing stations upon entering the facility, remove footwear, check-in with facility logs and the Mini-league Coordinator, collect their individual flag belt for the session, then follow the facility flow to their designated team space for that session. When exiting participants should return all league equipment to the Mini-league Coordinator and follow facility flow out of the building immediately as directed. To ensure no overlap between mini-leagues and other user groups, participants will be asked to leave the facility immediately at the end of their session.
- **On the field of play and in waiting areas.** When participants enter the field space (playing area and sidelines) or waiting areas (for teams not involved in a match) they should still adhere to masking and physical distancing requirements, remaining masked and maintaining 2m of distance between participants unless participating in game play. The Mini-league coordinator will signal transitions between matches and participants are asked to remain in their designated spaces until directed otherwise. Only participants on teams actively playing a match may be on the field of play and movement throughout the facility during sessions is discouraged.
- **Individual and shared equipment.** Each participant will be provided a flag belt and 2 flags at the beginning of each session, they may not exchange these items with other participants and the same equipment should be returned at the end of the session. Team captains will be provided game balls, stopwatches, and contactless whistles for timekeepers and referees. This equipment must be used only by the designated individual or sanitized between uses. Sanitizer and extra equipment will be kept with the Mini-league Coordinator on-site. Rugby balls are the only permitted individual equipment that can be brought into the facility for warm-up or use in waiting areas but may only be used by the individual and/or individual's team and must be sanitized before and after each session by the individual.
- **Transitioning between field of play and waiting areas.** Match time and subsequent transition for the next match will be signalled by the Mini-league Coordinator. All participants must assemble their own personal belongings, any provided equipment handled in the match (stopwatch, whistle), and proceed to their next designated space while maintained physical distance (2m) and following facility flow. This should be completed quickly as any warm-up or match time elapsed during transitions will be LOST.

COVID-19 Information for Participants > Equipment Use Restrictions & Cleaning Protocols

When delivering indoor rugby activities, we must make special effort to maintain physical distance, reduce touch points, and reduce close contacts. Shared equipment is a touch point, so additional cleaning protocols and restrictions on use are in place throughout the league to minimize the risk for COVID-19 transmission.

Rugby balls are the only permitted individual equipment that can be brought into the facility for warm-up or use in waiting areas but may only be used by the individual and/or individual's team and must be sanitized before and after each session by the individual. All equipment for game play will be provided by Mini-league Coordinators at the beginning of each session. See the information below on how each piece of equipment will be provided/used and what steps will be taken to ensure that risk is mitigated.

Balls: Two rugby balls will be provided for each mini-league session, one will be used during a match with the other freshly disinfected and ready to use. Matches will alternate between balls and after each use the ball will be disinfected. If the ball makes contact with the face of a participant it will be removed and disinfected, switching in the clean ball.

Flags & Belts: Flags and flag belts will only be used by one individual per mini-league per session. There will be no sharing of flags and belts. Participants will obtain a disinfected belt upon entering the facility and will return the used belt at the conclusion of their games at the facility exit. Flags and belts will be disinfected between sessions and only freshly disinfected equipment will be provided. Players are encouraged to use hand sanitizer before and after each game to ensure minimal contamination of flags during the normal course of gameplay.

Cones & Markers: Cones or other markers may be used to mark endzone areas or halfway lines. While participants are encouraged to not touch these items once they have been placed by the Coordinator, they will be disinfected when/if they are touched (which may be required if moved accidentally during gameplay). The cones & markers will be disinfected before and after being placed on the field for gameplay.

Whistles: Volunteer referees will be given electronic (no-blow) whistles that have been disinfected. Like with flags and belts, the whistles will be issued to each volunteer for the duration of the evening and will not be shared between officials. The whistles will be returned at the end of the games and disinfected before the next use.

Scoreboard: A scoreboard will be used to keep track of scoring during games. The scoreboard will be disinfected prior to the first game and in between each game (since the volunteer scorekeeper will be changing).

In addition to the protocols for the cleaning of equipment listed above, facility staff will be continually cleaning the facility throughout the evening. Facility staff will focus on cleaning high-touch areas such as washrooms, door handles, railings, and benches. The facility staff in each facility have been provided a copy of the Facility Flow Plan below in order to optimize their cleaning activities to ensure that priority areas are cleaned with minimal impact on gameplay and participant movement.

COVID-19 Information for Participants > Site Maps & Facility Flow Plans

Each facility in use for this league will be governed by a Facility Flow Plan that outlines how each team and participant should move through the facility as they transition from matches on the field to waiting areas and vice-versa. Adherence to these plans is a key piece of lowering the risk of COVID-19 transmission as they have been designed to prevent unnecessary mingling of individuals.

Below you will see the Facility Flow Plan for each facility as well as a corresponding Site Map that provides a visual companion for the Facility Flow Plan. The Facility Flow Plans presented below are examples for a single mini-league of 4 teams and therefore the times used will need to be adjusted for later mini-leagues or for mini-leagues with different numbers of teams. Final drafts of these Facility Flow Plans will be made available to participants before the first week of games (i.e. after the final mini-league configurations have been confirmed) and posted in the facilities each week.

Regina – Regina Sports Performance Centre

Facility Address: 1464 Broadway Avenue, Regina, SK

Nightly Game Schedule for Each Mini-League:

Game 1: Team A v Team B (Team C to Ref/Scorekeep)

Game 2: Team B v Team C (Team A to Ref/Scorekeep)

Game 3: Team A v Team D (Team B to Ref/Scorekeep)

Game 4: Team B v Team D (Team C to Ref/Scorekeep)

Game 5: Team A v Team C (Team D to Ref/Scorekeep)

Game 6: Team C v Team D (Team A to Ref/Scorekeep)

Note: Volunteer referees and scorekeepers should be aware of how their movements through the facility will differ from those of the rest of their team. This includes potentially needing to arrive earlier than the rest of the team or remain in the facility for another match following the conclusion of their team's last match.

Benches & Waiting Areas:

Bench #1: West end of field (furthest end from the entrance to the field area)

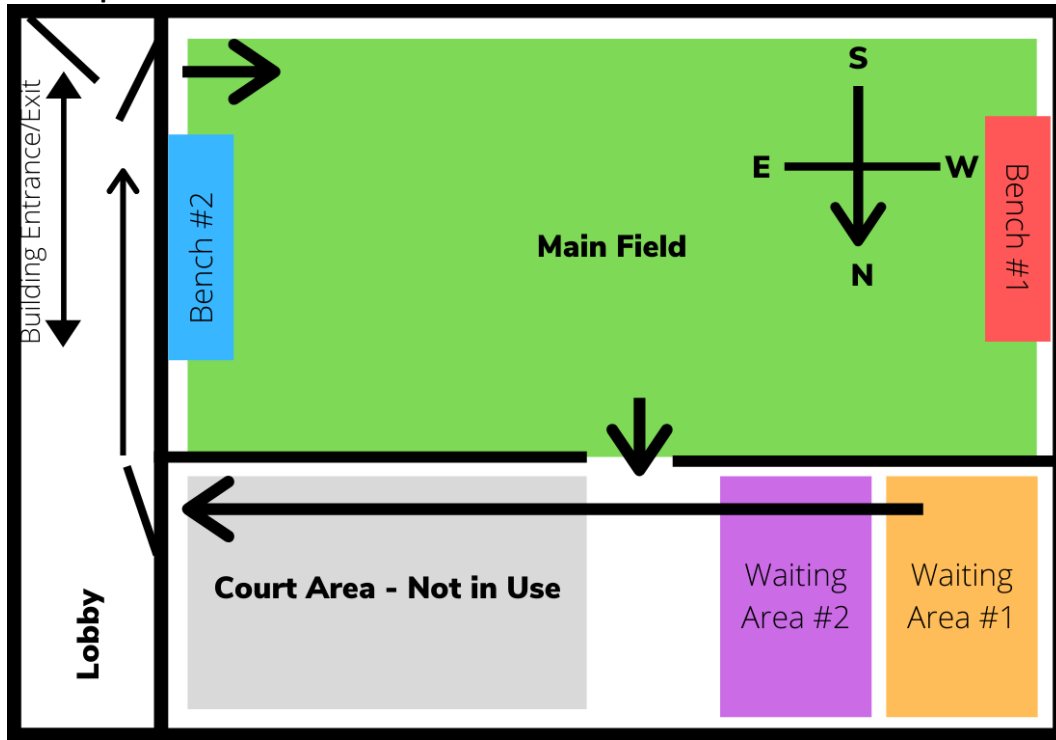
Bench #2: East end of field (closest end to the entrance to the field area)

Waiting Area #1: West side of small turf area

Waiting Area #2: East side of small turf area

Lobby: Open area immediately after entering the building and before entering field area

Site Map:



Movement Patterns By Team for Each Mini-League

Time	Team A	Team B	Team C	Team D
6-6:10pm	Enter facility & change shoes	Enter facility & change shoes		
6:10-6:21pm	Game 1 – Bench #1	Game 1 – Bench #2	Enter facility & change shoes – Lobby	
1min:30sec change over	Proceed to Waiting Area #1 (walk across field to divider between field and waiting areas)	Remain on Bench #2	Proceed to Bench #1 (walk directly across the field)	
6:22:30-6:33:30pm	Waiting Area #1	Game 2 – Bench #2	Game 2 – Bench #1	Enter facility & change shoes – Lobby
1min:30sec change over	Proceed to Bench #2 (cross court area and loop through Lobby)	Proceed to Waiting Area #2 (walk across field to divider between field and waiting areas)	Proceed to Waiting Area #1 (walk across field to divider between field and waiting areas)	Proceed to Bench #1 (walk directly across the field)

6:35-6:46pm	Game 3 – Bench #2	Waiting Area #2	Waiting Area #1	Game 3 – Bench #1
1min:30sec change over	Proceed to Waiting Area #2 (walk across field to divider between field and waiting areas)	Proceed to Bench #2 (cross court area and loop through Lobby)	Remain in Waiting Area #1	Remain on Bench #1
6:47:30-6:58:30pm	Waiting Area #2	Game 4 – Bench #2	Waiting Area #1	Game 4 – Bench #1
1min:30sec change over	Proceed to Bench #2 (cross court area and loop through Lobby)	Proceed to Lobby (walk towards the Waiting Areas and then cross court area)	Proceed to Bench #1 (cross court area and loop through Lobby)	Proceed to Waiting Area #1 (walk across field to divider between field and waiting areas)
7:00-7:11pm	Game 5 – Bench #2	Change shoes & exit facility	Game 5 – Bench #1	Waiting Area #1
1min:30sec change over	Proceed to Lobby (walk towards the Waiting Areas and then cross court area)		Remain on Bench #1	Proceed to Bench #2 (cross court area and loop through Lobby)
7:12:30-7:23:30pm	Change shoes & exit facility		Game 6 – Bench #1	Game 6 – Bench #2
1min:30sec change over			Proceed to Lobby (walk towards the Waiting Areas and then cross court area)	Proceed to Lobby (walk towards the Waiting Areas and then cross court area)
7:25-7:30pm			Change shoes & exit facility	Change shoes & exit facility

Saskatoon – Elite PROformance Centre

Facility Address: 335 68th Street East, Saskatoon, SK

Nightly Game Schedule for Each Mini-League:

Game 1: Team A v Team B (Team C to Ref/Scorekeep)

Game 2: Team B v Team C (Team A to Ref/Scorekeep)

Game 3: Team A v Team D (Team B to Ref/Scorekeep)

Game 4: Team B v Team D (Team C to Ref/Scorekeep)

Game 5: Team A v Team C (Team D to Ref/Scorekeep)

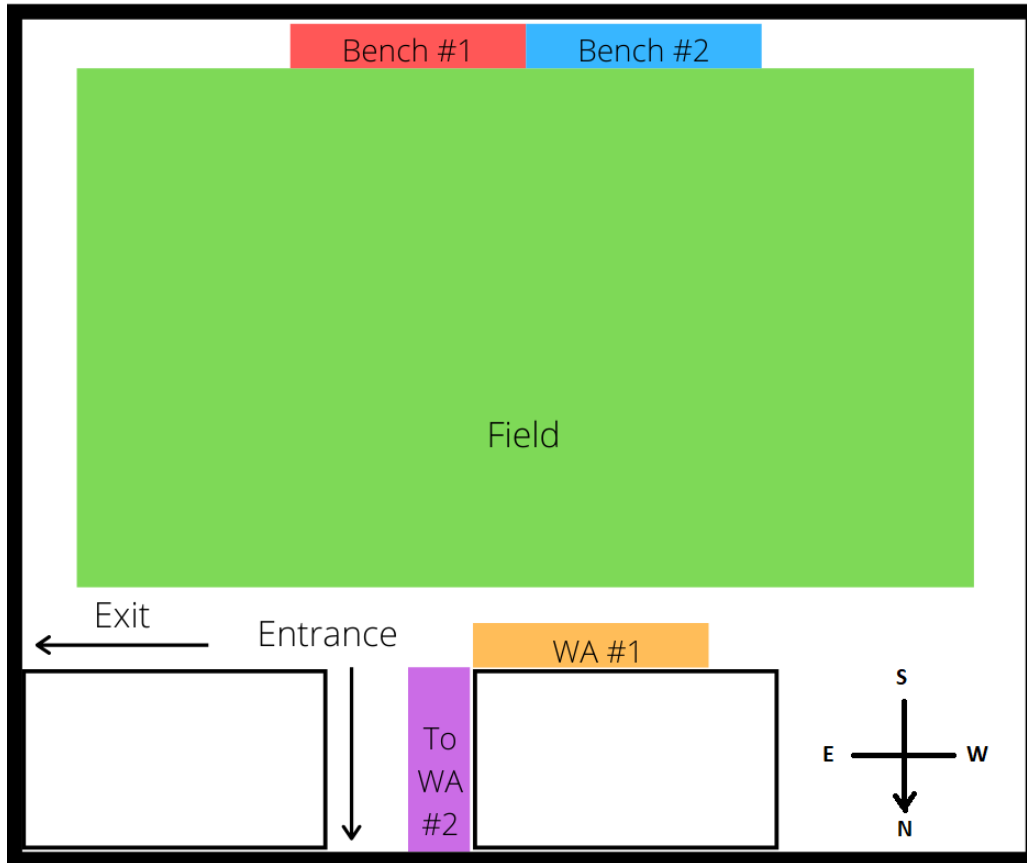
Game 6: Team C v Team D (Team A to Ref/Scorekeep)

Note: Volunteer referees and scorekeepers should be aware of how their movements through the facility will differ from those of the rest of their team. This includes potentially needing to arrive earlier than the rest of the team or remain in the facility for another match following the conclusion of their team's last match.

Benches & Waiting Areas:

- Bench #1: East side of field (left when looking from the front door)
- Bench #2: West side of field (right when looking from the front door)
- Waiting Area #1: North side of field by changerooms
- Waiting Area #2: Upstairs viewing area

Site Map:



Movement Patterns By Team for Each Mini-League

Time	Team A	Team B	Team C	Team D
9-9:10pm	Enter facility & change shoes	Enter facility & change shoes		
9:10-9:21pm	Game 1 – Bench #1	Game 1 – Bench #2	Enter facility & change shoes – Waiting Area #1	

1min:30sec change over	Proceed to Waiting Area #2 (walk around the east end of the field to the stairs – do not cross field directly)	Remain on Bench #2	Proceed to Bench #1 (walk directly across the field)	
9:22:30- 9:33:30pm	Waiting Area #2	Game 2 – Bench #2	Game 2 – Bench #1	Enter facility & change shoes – Waiting Area #1
1min:30sec change over	Proceed to Bench #1 (walk directly across the field)	Proceed to Waiting Area #1 (walk around the west end of the field – do not cross field directly)	Proceed to Waiting Area #2 (walk around the east end of the field to the stairs – do not cross field directly)	Proceed to Bench #2 (walk directly across the field)
9:35-9:46pm	Game 3 – Bench #1	Waiting Area #1	Waiting Area #2	Game 3 – Bench #2
1min:30sec change over	Proceed to Waiting Area #1 (walk around the east end of the field – do not cross field directly)	Proceed to Bench #1 (walk directly across the field)	Remain in Waiting Area #2	Remain on Bench #2
9:47:30- 9:58:30pm	Waiting Area #1	Game 4 – Bench #1	Waiting Area #2	Game 4 – Bench #2
1min:30sec change over	Proceed to Bench #2 (walk directly across the field)	Proceed to Waiting Area #1 (walk around the east end of the field – do not cross field directly)	Proceed to Bench #1 (walk directly across the field)	Proceed to Waiting Area #2 (walk around the west end of the field to the stairs – do not cross field directly)
10:00-10:11pm	Game 5 – Bench #2	Change shoes & exit facility	Game 5 – Bench #1	Waiting Area #2
1min:30sec change over	Proceed to Waiting Area #1 (walk around the west end of the field – do not cross field directly)		Remain on Bench #1	Proceed to Bench #2 (walk directly across the field)
10:12:30- 10:23:30pm	Change shoes & exit facility		Game 6 – Bench #1	Game 6 – Bench #2

1min:30sec change over			Proceed to Waiting Area #1	Proceed to Waiting Area #1
10:25-10:30pm			Change shoes & exit facility	Change shoes & exit facility

Appendix 1: Full Flag Rugby Rules

Saskatchewan Rugby

5 on 5 Flag Rugby Rules

Updated: November 2020

1. PLAYING AREA

- 1.1. The playing area shall be no greater than 60m x 35m. The minimum field width should be no smaller than 25m (i.e. 5m width per player).
- 1.2. The playing area will be clearly marked, with a clearly marked end zone area and halfway line.
- 1.3. The 5 players on a team will be the only people entitled to be on the playing area during a game. Substitutes and spectators must not be on the playing area during a game.

2. DURATION OF PLAY

- 2.1. The duration of play shall be determined by the match organizer. It is recommended that individual games not exceed 30 minutes.
- 2.2. The running of time shall be continuous unless explicitly stopped by the referee.
- 2.3. Games over 12 minutes in duration shall include a halftime break. The duration of halftime shall be at the discretion of the match organizer but should be proportional to the duration of each half (e.g. halves of 7.5 minutes may only require a 1 minute break but halves of 15 minutes should have a 2 minute break).
- 2.4. The game or half ends at the indication of the referee or timekeeper.
 - 2.4.1. If using a method of ending the half other than the traditional “triple blast” of a whistle, this methodology should be confirmed with the teams before the match.

3. NUMBER OF PLAYERS

- 3.1. Games will be played with a maximum 5 players on the playing area at any one time.
- 3.2. The number of allowed substitutes will be determined by the match organizer.
- 3.3. A team will forfeit the match if they cannot field 5 players from their roster.
 - 3.3.1. The match organizer will determine any other course of action required following a forfeit as appropriate for their competition (e.g. scoring of forfeited match, replacement players for exhibition game, etc.).

4. SUBSTITUTES

- 4.1. Substitutions may be made at any point throughout the match.

- 4.2. Players substituting on must have the proper equipment (flags) prior to stepping into the play area and may not enter the playing area until the player that they are replacing has left the playing area.
- 4.3. All substitutions must be made from the halfway line on the side of the field in front of the team benches (i.e. players leaving and entering the playing area at this location). Exception may be made in the case of injury where the injured player is unable to proceed to this location and must be moved from the field via the closest sideline.

5. REFEREES

- 5.1. Matches may be refereed by any individual with a competent grasp of these rules.
- 5.2. The referee shall be responsible for the management of the game and enforcement of these rules on the field of play.
 - 5.2.1. The referee may position themselves along one touchline or on the field, as is their preference.
 - 5.2.2. The referee may appoint a linesperson(s), including a time/scorekeeper, to manage the sideline(s).
- 5.3. The referee will shout the number of tags that have been made (e.g. "THREE!") when each tag has been made and "TURNOVER!" after the 6th tag.
- 5.4. The referee may delegate a timekeeper to blow the whistle to signal the start and end of the game. All other stoppages will be whistled by the referee, including any decisions to stop game time to deal with an injury or disciplinary issue.

6. EQUIPMENT

- 6.1. Players are required to wear a flag belt with two flags while on the field of play.
 - 6.1.1. The flags must be positioned to have one flag on each hip. Players shall not attempt to gain advantage by placing two flags on a single hip or wearing their flags in any other configuration.
 - 6.1.2. The belt must be worn outside the clothing (it is recommended that players' shirts be tucked in) and flags shall not be concealed.
 - 6.1.3. Playing the ball while wearing flags in an improper configuration or with flags concealed will result in a turnover of possession to the non-offending team.
- 6.2. If a player accidentally loses a flag when they have the ball, it will be considered a tag. This will not count towards number of tags allowed before a turnover.
- 6.3. A player whose belt is malfunctioning shall leave the field of play to repair or replace their equipment.

6.4. Players footwear shall conform to the facility's rules regarding footwear (e.g. no metal studs).

7. STARTING PLAY

7.1. One team starts each game from the center of the field with a free pass.

7.2. If a halftime break is being observed, the team that does not start the game shall start the second half.

7.3. When a try is scored, the non-scoring team starts at the center of the field with a free pass. The non-scoring team may proceed to re-start play at their own pace unless the referee has whistled for play to stop provided that the scoring team has all five players back on their own half of the field.

8. FREE PASS

8.1. To make a free pass, the ball must be "kicked" a visible distance (commonly referred to as a "tap"). If the kicker is holding it, it must clearly leave the hands. If it is on the ground, it must clearly leave the mark. Once the "kick" has been successfully taken the kicker may play the ball again in order to pass the ball backwards to a member of their own team.

8.2. A free pass is used to restart play at any time that play has halted and needs to be restarted, including being awarded to the non-offending team when their opposition infringes the rules.

8.3. If the ball travels out of the field of play, the game is restarted with a free pass to the side that was not the last side to touch it inside the field of play

8.3.1. If the ball travels out of the field of play into touch (i.e. across the sidelines), the free pass shall be taken at the point where the ball travelled out of play.

8.3.2. If the ball travels out of the field of play across the dead ball line (i.e. the back of the end zone), the free pass shall be taken from the point that it was last touched inside the field of play. If the last touch inside the field of play happens within the end zone (regardless of the team who makes the last touch), the free pass shall be taken 5 meters from the goal line.

8.4. Re-Starting Play After an Infringement: The defenders must remain **5** meters back from the player making the free pass (who shall do so from the referee's mark). They cannot start moving forward until the ball leaves the hands of the player making the free pass.

8.5. Re-Starting Play in Open Play or from Touch: After a tag has been made, the defenders must remain **1** meter back from the player making the free pass. They cannot start moving forward until the ball leaves the hands of the player making the free pass.

9. TAG

- 9.1.** To complete a tag one of the two flags from the ball carrier's belt must be removed.
- 9.2.** The only person who can be tagged is the ball carrier.
- 9.3.** The defender (tagger) must stop, hold the flag above their head, and shout "FLAG!" The flag should then be dropped to the ground to mark the location of the tag. The defender must not deliberately throw the flag away from the place that the tag was made.
- 9.4.** When a tag has been made the ball carrier must then pass the ball immediately (within two strides). If a pass cannot be made within two strides the ball carrier must return to the location of the tag to resume play with a free pass. If a pass is made outside of the allowed two strides, the referee will bring play back to the location of the tag, with the attacking team retaining possession unless they have exhausted their allowed number of tags.
- 9.5.** Six (6) tags in a row leads to a turnover in possession.
- 9.6.** The tag count will be restarted when there is a turnover or when an infringement occurs.

10. SCORING

- 10.1.** A try will be deemed to be scored when an attacking player touches the ball down in the end zone while still in possession of both of their flags.
- 10.2.** A try will be worth 1 point.
- 10.3.** Players may not intentionally dive to score a try.
- 10.4.** A try will be deemed to be scored if the attacking player is in the process of touching the ball down (i.e. making a clear motion to touch the ball to the ground) when their flag is pulled provided that the touch down is successfully completed in that motion.
- 10.5.** If the attacking player's flag is pulled while in the end zone but the player is not making an attempt to touch the ball to the ground, a tag will be called and the attacking team will restart play with a free pass from the goal line.

11. PASSING THE BALL

- 11.1.** The ball can only be passed by the ball carrier in a backwards direction.
- 11.2.** Attackers must not pass the ball forward; towards the defenders' try line.
- 11.3.** Attackers may not hand the ball to another attacker.
- 11.4.** A free pass will be awarded to the opposition if an attacker passes the ball forward or hands the ball to another attacker.
- 11.5.** If the ball is not caught to conclude a pass play will continue unless an infringement (e.g. knock on or forward pass) has occurred.

12. KICKING

12.1. There is no kicking of any kind in flag rugby.

13. ADVANTAGE

13.1. Not stopping the game when an infringement happens is called 'advantage'.

13.2. Referees should play 'advantage' to the non-offending team if there is any chance that they may be advantaged by there being no stoppage in play. For instance, if the non-offending team gets the ball or retains the ball in circumstances that are more favourable than if a free pass was called.

13.3. In the case of infringement by the defending team where the attacking team remains in possession, the referee may play advantage to the attacking team by resetting their tag count to zero and allowing play to continue.

13.4. The referee should call 'advantage' followed by 'play on' if an advantage is deemed by the referee to occur.

13.5. If no advantage occurs within a reasonable period play restarts with a free pass.

13.5.1. There shall be no advantage if the non-offending team obtains possession via a knock on and has no ability to make a pass or take evasive action before being tagged (e.g. flag is pulled the moment that the player picks up the ball).

14. KNOCK ON

14.1. When a player knocks the ball towards the opponents' try line and does not regain control of the ball before it touches the ground, another player, or the referee, a free pass is awarded to the non-offending team unless an advantage can be played.

15. CONTACT

15.1. There shall be no intentional physical contact between players. Contact will not be permitted unless considered incidental. Running directly, purposely, with and without intent to injure the opposition can be considered contact.

15.2. The sanction for contact will be a free pass to the non-offending team. Extreme cases of contact will result in the offending player being removed from the pitch. The decision and severity of the penalty is at the discretion of the referee. The match organizer may levy an additional suspension if deemed necessary upon the advice of the referee.

16. ATTACKERS

16.1. The ball carrier shall not fend defenders off using their hands or the ball.

- 16.2.** The ball carrier shall not guard or shield their flags in any way, including using the ball to block an attempt to remove the flag.
- 16.3.** A player cannot spin (a revolution greater than 180 degrees from the line of movement) in order to prevent a defender from making a tag.
- 16.3.1.** Spinning movements will be allowed in other circumstances where a defender is not in position to make a tag (e.g. retrieving a ball far away from the opposition and turning sharply).
- 16.4.** In the case of any infringement of 16.1-16.3, a free pass is awarded to the non-offending team.

17. DEFENDERS

- 17.1.** Defenders ripping the flag off the belt of the ball carrier (i.e. a tag) stops the ball carrier's progress.
- 17.2.** Defenders shall not grab the ball carrier's jersey, shorts, flag belt, or other equipment that is not the flag with the intent to slow the player or make a tag possible.
- 17.3.** Defenders shall not purposefully make contact with the ball carrier in the process of making a tag.
- 17.4.** In the case of any infringement of 17.2-17.3, a free pass is awarded to the non-offending team.

18. OFFSIDE

- 18.1.** Offside only occurs at a tag or restart of play (see 8. Free Pass).
- 18.2.** When a tag is made, all players from the defender's team retreat until they are behind where the tag was made. Defenders will be considered offside until they cross that mark plus 1 meter.
- 18.3.** If a player is offside and they intercept, prevent, or slow down a pass, they will be penalized and a free pass will be awarded to the non-offending team, unless an advantage can be played.
- 18.4.** If the attacking player attempts an offload within two strides of a tag being made (see 9.4 Flag), the defensive player will not be considered offside if they have retreated past the point where the tag was made.

19. GOING TO GROUND

- 19.1.** If the ball carrier intentionally goes to ground or a player dives on the ball, a free pass is awarded to the opposition.
- 19.2.** If the ball carrier goes to ground unintentionally (e.g. trips), it will be considered to be a tag but will not count towards the count of flags for a turnover.
- 19.3.** Players cannot dive for a try or dive on the ball for a try.

20. FAIR PLAY

- 20.1.** All players must play games in a positive spirit following the principles of good sportsmanship.
- 20.2.** In instances of verbal abuse, physical abuse, poor sportsmanship, intentional offending, persistent re-offending, or any other offending deemed unnecessary the referee may send a player from the playing area.
- 20.3.** If a player is sent from the playing area by the referee under 20.2 they must remain off for the remainder of that game and leave the bench area. However, that player can be replaced by another player who has not been sent off.

21. FINAL INTERPRETATION

- 21.1.** If there are differing interpretations of or disagreements with these rules, a final interpretation will be decided by the match organizer. If no match organizer is on site the final call goes to the referee.
- 21.2.** The match organizer, or referee within the context of a single match, shall clarify any interpretations with all participating teams in a timely fashion to ensure fairness of the competition.