



"ELEVATE THE GAME"

**PARENT &
ATHLETE
HANDBOOK**

WELCOME

LEAGUE OVERVIEW:

Flag football is taking the country by storm — it's one of the fastest-growing youth sports in America, with millions of kids across all 50 states discovering a faster, safer, and more inclusive way to play the game they love. From backyard fun to Olympic dreams in 2028, flag football is opening doors like never before: building real football skills, boosting confidence, teaching teamwork, and creating lifelong athletes and friends. Right here in Summit County, we're excited to bring that same energy to our mountains.

Summit FLAG is organized, family-friendly, and competitively balanced without ever feeling overwhelming. Our goal is simple: create a fun, structured environment where kids develop skills, compete, and grow a true love for the game.

One practice per week + Thursday/Friday game nights at Summit Middle School keeps the schedule manageable for busy families across Summit County.

Our Mission, Values, and Philosophy are simple:

- **Fun matters.** Kids should look forward to showing up each week.
- **Development matters.** Athletes should leave more skilled, confident, and knowledgeable.
- **Safety matters.** Physical and emotional safety, plus respectful adult behavior, are non-negotiable.
- **Sportsmanship matters.** Respect for teammates, opponents, coaches, officials, staff, and families.
- **Balance matters.** Teams, divisions, and scheduling prioritize fairness and long-term league health.

We believe in keeping things simple, intentional, and focused on what matters most; creating a great experience for players, coaches, and families across Summit County.



LEAGUE STRUCTURE

AGES & DIVISIONS:

- Athletes ages 7–14.
- Divisions are age-based for fair competition and safety.
- Final divisions are set after registration and may be adjusted for the best overall experience.

SEASON FORMAT:

- Regular season games followed by playoffs.
- All teams participate fully, including postseason play.
- Schedules and divisions may adjust based on registration, weather, or field availability.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE:

Team Practices

- One practice per week (Monday–Wednesday evenings).
- Locations rotate between Silverthorne, Frisco, and Breckenridge Elementary.
- Teams are assigned a consistent practice slot.

Game Nights

- Thursday or Friday evenings at Summit Middle School.
- Players arrive early for check-in and team warm-up.

Pre-Game Warm-Up

Each game includes a short coach-led warm-up/mini practice to review plays and keep development progressing without adding extra weekly commitments.

TEAM FORMATION & BALANCE:

- Teams are formed by the league with a focus on fairness and overall experience.
- Balanced by age, skill, and roster needs.
- Practice location considered when possible.
- Friend and coach requests may be considered but are not guaranteed.
- No request overrides competitive balance.
- The league may adjust teams or divisions before the season for fairness and safety.



LEAGUE STRUCTURE

REGISTRATION, ELIGIBILITY, ROSTERS:

Athletes must register for the correct age division. Proof of age may be requested. All registration forms, waivers, and acknowledgements must be completed before participation.

Late Registration: Welcome as long as roster space, equipment, and team balance allow. After teams are formed, requests for practice location, coaches, or teammates are not guaranteed.

Roster sizes vary by division but are designed to maximize playing time, allow substitutions, and provide depth for absences.

- Minimum Players to Play: Teams must have enough players for safe participation. Short teams may play as a scrimmage or forfeit depending on the situation — safety and fairness come first.

COMMUNICATION:

Summit FLAG is committed to clear and timely communication. Families are expected to keep contact information current and review all league messages.

- Primary communication: email and text.
- Schedules, weather updates, reminders, and policy changes come from the league and/or coaches.
- Sideline conversations do not replace official communication.
- Game-day staff may not be available for non-urgent questions.
- Always check for updates on game days, especially in questionable weather.

Coach Communication Guidelines

To support athlete safety, Summit FLAG follows NFL FLAG communication standards:

- Coaches should communicate directly with parents or include parents in all messages
- 1-on-1 electronic communication between coaches and athletes is not permitted unless a parent or guardian is included



LEAGUE EXPECTATIONS

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

Parents play a key role in creating a positive league experience.

- Complete registration accurately and read all league communications.
- Ensure your athlete arrives on time with required equipment.
- Communicate absences early.
- Model sportsmanship, respect, and emotional control.
- Address concerns privately and respectfully with the appropriate person — never from the sideline.
- Support a team culture focused on effort, learning, and respect.

What Parents Should Avoid

- Coaching from the spectator area.
- Arguing with officials, coaches, players, or other families.
- Pressuring coaches about positions, play calls, or touches.
- Confronting another child (bring concerns to league staff).

ATHLETE RESPONSIBILITIES:

Athletes are expected to represent themselves, their team, and the league well.

- Show up ready to listen, compete, and support teammates
- Wear required equipment properly
- Follow instructions from coaches, referees, and staff
- Play within the rules and with self-control
- Avoid trash talk, taunting, and negative behavior
- Respect teammates, opponents, coaches, and officials
- Give full effort, even when things are not going your way

COACHES RESPONSIBILITIES:

Coaches and staff set the tone for the league experience.

- Complete required background checks and league training.
- Lead with positivity, organization, and preparation.
- Focus on coaching and development, not just winning.
- Maintain control of the sideline and team environment.
- Use respectful, encouraging communication at all times.
- Include parents in all communication with athletes.
- Only approved coaches may be on the sideline or field.
- Be familiar with league safety procedures.



LEAGUE EXPECTATIONS

LEAGUE LEADERSHIP & COMPLAINTS:

League leadership has final authority on scheduling, team assignments, discipline, and operations. Game officials have final authority on on-field decisions.

Appropriate Concerns (*raise calmly through coach or league*):

- Player safety issues
- Repeated conduct or behavior concerns
- Clear rule application questions
- Significant operational issues affecting participation

Not Appropriate for Formal Complaints

- Playing time or touches
- Single play calls or strategy decisions
- Routine referee judgment calls
- One-game performance frustrations

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS:

Summit FLAG will discipline athletes, parents, coaches, or spectators when standards are not met. Discipline may be progressive or immediate, depending on severity:

- Warning
- Temporary removal or loss of playing time
- Game ejection
- Suspension from league activities
- Removal from the league (no refund in severe cases)

Examples of Behavior That May Lead to Discipline

- Fighting, intentional tackling, or dangerous play
- Profanity, threats, harassment, or verbal abuse
- Ignoring instructions from officials or staff
- Bullying, hazing, retaliation, or discrimination
- Parent or coach behavior that undermines safety or sportsmanship

SIDELINE CONDUCT:

- Positive cheering is welcome.
- Negative comments, profanity, intimidation, or confrontational behavior toward anyone are not acceptable.
- Parents may not step onto the field or into the team area unless directed.
- Do not coach from the sideline.
- Use a 24-hour cool-down before escalating non-urgent concerns.



LEAGUE PROCEDURES

EQUIPMENT, UNIFORM, AND APPEARANCE RULES:

Required Equipment:

- Official NFL FLAG belt and flags
- Mouthguard (worn at all times on the field)
- Athletic shoes or cleats appropriate for the surface (no metal cleats)

Permitted Equipment: Gloves, soft protective pads, secured soft-shell helmets, sunglasses, prescription glasses.

NOT Permitted:

- Jewelry
- Any brace with exposed metal
- Anything that obscures or interferes with flags

Clothing guidance

- Tuck jerseys if they hang below the belt line.
- Shorts/pants without pockets or belt loops strongly recommended.
- Flag colors must not match shorts/pants in a way that creates visual confusion.
- Dress for mountain weather — conditions change quickly.

PRACTICE PROCEDURES:

- Practice starts on time — arrive early.
- Coaches take attendance and emphasize organized instruction (spacing, routes, handoffs, flag pulling, communication, game understanding).
- Water breaks are required in sun, altitude, heat, or smoke.
- Disruptive, unsafe, or disrespectful athletes may be removed from drills, placed with a parent, or sent home.
- Unsafe weather or field conditions may result in modified, shortened, delayed, or canceled practice.

GAME-DAY PROCEDURES:

- Arrive 10–15 minutes early (unless coach instructs otherwise).
- Report to team area, gear up, and be ready for warm-up immediately.
- Warm-up is coach-directed — not open spectator coaching time.
- One sideline per team. Players and approved coaches only in team area. Spectators stay in designated viewing area, away from field boundary.
- After the game, teams show sportsmanship. Rule questions should be raised calmly and promptly. Once a dispute is settled and people leave the field, it is considered closed.



LEAGUE PROCEDURES

PLAYING TIME, POSITIONS & DEVELOPMENT:

Summit FLAG is a development-focused league, not a “win-at-all-costs” program.

- **Regular season:** All players receive meaningful and consistent playing time. Coaches rotate positions when appropriate.
- Playing time is managed around attendance, effort, safety, behavior, fatigue, and understanding of assignments.
- **Playoffs:** Lineups may become more competitive, but every athlete still participates.
- Extreme favoritism or benching that conflicts with the league’s development model is not acceptable.

SAFETY AND ATHLETE PROTECTION:

Summit FLAG follows the NFL FLAG athlete protection model. Child safety is the top priority.

Background Checks

All adults who regularly interact with players must complete recurring background checks per NFL FLAG standards and Colorado law.

Prohibited Conduct

Abuse, bullying, harassment, hazing, grooming, retaliation, and any form of misconduct (emotional, physical, sexual, or discriminatory) are strictly prohibited.

Appropriate Interactions

- Adults should avoid being alone with athletes who are not their own child unless it is an emergency.
- All interactions should remain visible and interruptible.
- Coaches/staff will not communicate electronically with athletes unless a parent/guardian is included.

Reporting & Response

- Safety concerns must be reported immediately.
- The league may remove or suspend individuals during review of serious concerns.
- Retaliation against good-faith reporters is prohibited.
- When appropriate, concerns will be reported to law enforcement or child protection agencies.



LEAGUE PROCEDURES

INJURY PROCEDURES:

The safety of every athlete is our top priority. Play stops immediately for any injury. Coaches and staff will create space around the player, contact the parent or guardian right away, provide first aid as needed, and call emergency services (911) in any serious or uncertain situation.

- Athletes will not return to play if there is any question about their safety or condition.
- Concussion Policy: Any suspected concussion results in immediate removal from play. There is no same-day return. Written medical clearance from a licensed professional is required before returning to any league activity.
- Families must provide up-to-date emergency contact information and relevant health details (allergies, asthma, medications, previous injuries, or restrictions) at registration. Parents are responsible for notifying the league and coaches of any changes.
- Coaches and staff do not administer or store medication unless prior written arrangements have been made with the league and parents.

WEATHER & ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS:

- Games/practices may continue in cold, wind, or light rain if safe.
- Events may be delayed, shortened, or canceled for lightning, severe weather, unsafe fields, poor visibility, or unhealthy air quality.
- Lightning = immediate field clearance. Return only when safe.
- Smoke/air quality may require modification or cancellation.
- Weather updates sent ~2 hours before game time; on-site decisions may still be needed.
- Makeup games are scheduled when possible but not guaranteed.
- Athletes should bring water and dress in layers for mountain conditions.

REFUNDS, CREDITS, WITHDRAWALS:

- Before 6/15/26: Full refunds minus processing fees.
- After 6/15/26 but before season starts: Partial refunds may be issued based on timing and committed costs (uniforms, admin, etc.).
- Once teams are formed or season begins: Refunds generally not available.
- Season-ending injuries may qualify for prorated refund with medical documentation.
- No refunds for missed games/practices, weather, schedule conflicts, travel, illness, discipline, or preference changes.
- A program credit may be issued instead of a refund when appropriate.



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At **Summit FLAG**, our mission is to build a fun, safe, and competitive environment where athletes can grow their skills, build confidence, and develop a love for the game. Through teamwork, sportsmanship, and consistent effort, we aim to create a positive experience for every player and family.

Thank you for being part of **Summit FLAG** — we're excited for a great season together!