



How to...

GAME ON!

There are more than 700,000 flag football players and 1,800 leagues in the US.



Give flag football a try

Check out this fun, fast sport — no experience required!

Flag football is one of the fastest-growing sports in the US. No specific skills are required to play, and boys and girls of all ages can join. “Flag football is a sport for everyone,” Kelly Hantman, co-founder of Westfield PAL Girls Flag Football, in Westfield, New Jersey, told *The Week Junior*. “It’s an opportunity to participate in something just for fun and learn the values of being part of a team, like collaboration, facing a challenge, and learning success.” Here’s how to get started.

Understand the game

Flag football is a “no contact” sport, which means players don’t tackle one another like they do in regular football. Instead, each player wears a belt with two small flags. Players try to remove one or both of their opponent’s flags to end a play. The field in flag football is shorter than a traditional football field—about 50 yards long and 25 yards wide, with two end zones that are 10 yards deep. A game is played between two teams of five to eight players who attempt to score points by moving the ball down the field to cross the goal line and score a touchdown. A game typically lasts about 40 minutes and is split into two 20-minute halves.



Minimal equipment is needed.

Sign up to play

With an adult’s help, you can look for opportunities to learn and play flag football. Find out from your local recreation center, parks department, or Police Athletic League if they are hosting flag football clinics, leagues, and tournaments. You can also search for a flag football team near you at nffflag.com or nationalflagfootball.com. To play, you’ll need a belt with flags, a team jersey, and a football. Cleats are useful but optional.

Get some practice

“Speed is an advantage in flag football for running the ball and to pull flags,” said Hantman. Practice running up and down the field, flag pulling, and throwing and catching the ball. You can also practice tucking the ball close to you to protect it from opponents. With the help of a coach or an experienced player, you can also learn basic plays.

Enjoy yourself

Flag football is about learning the game and having fun. “Flag football also helps grow special bonds in families,” said Hantman. “Many are enjoying the experience of football together for the first time.”

Olympic debut



Flag football will be played in the Olympics for the first time at the 2028 Games in Los Angeles, California. The US, currently the top team in men’s and women’s flag football, will try to win gold. Mexico will also be a team to watch among both the men and the women.

Games will feature five players per team on the field. The venue for competition and the schedule will be announced closer to the Games.

“We have no doubt flag football is going to light up the Games when it makes its debut in four years’ time,” said Pierre Trochet, president of the International Federation of American Football.