

Flashlight Tag Official Rules

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1 Quickstart Guide

Flashlight Tag is a game played at night or in a dark area with four or more people. One person is selected to be IT by various ways (random choosing, volunteering, etc.), and a base is selected. IT stands at the base with his eyes closed and counts to a reasonably high number while the other players hide. When IT finishes counting, he may start searching for other players. Unless specifically voted for and approved as under Section 2.6, IT may not guard the base for a prolonged period of time. When he spots a player, IT must shine the flashlight on him *while* saying his name. The other players can move at will at any time; their objective is to get to the base untagged. When a satisfactory number of players have been caught, IT may end the game by announcing ‘The game is over.’ This ends the game and guarantees any hiding players safe passage to the base. The flashlight is given to the player first caught, or kept by IT if no player was. If IT does not catch anyone for two rounds, he may pick the next person to be IT.

2 In-Depth Rules ... The Game

2.1 Game Pre-Planning

- ◆ OBTAIN A GOOD FLASHLIGHT (SEE APPENDIX A: FLASHLIGHT STANDARDS FOR SUGGESTIONS REGARDING FLASHLIGHTS)
- ◆ DECIDE ON YARD BOUNDARIES AND BASE LOCATION(S)

Before the players arrive for the game, the Yard Master must secure a good, sturdy flashlight. Appendix A: Flashlight Standards gives rules and regulations regarding the official KnightGames flashlight standards. Sometime before the game, the Yard Master should also set the boundaries for the playing field and mark them. The markings can either be natural or manmade, so long as they are easy to see. Section 2.5 can be followed as a reference to good boundaries.

2.2 Pre-Game

- ◆ NOTIFY PLAYERS OF BOUNDARIES AND BASE LOCATION(S)
- ◆ PICK INITIAL IT OR ITS

All players should be notified of the boundaries of the yard before any rounds are played. If there are any oddities to the boundaries (multiple yard-spanning, irregular boundary shape, etc.), the entire boundary perimeter should be walked and pointed out before the game. After the game perimeters have been established, one or more ITs should be picked. The Yard Master should be IT first if the other players seem reluctant. Any common mechanism (drawing straws, flipping a coin, etc.) can be used to select IT.

2.3 Beginning of a Round

- ◆ **CONFIRM ANY CHANGES TO THE RULES**
- ◆ **GIVE THE FLASHLIGHT TO THE NEW IT**
- ◆ **CHOOSE A COUNT RANGE FROM 30-120**
- ◆ **IT COUNTS**
- ◆ **WHEN IT IS DONE, THE ROUND STARTS**

Before each round starts, any pertinent changes to the rules should be addressed. All players must be notified of the new rules before the round launches (ex. A player offers his yard to be included in the boundaries. The players approve following Section 2.6, and the Yard Master tells every player of the new boundaries). Note that it is the Yard Master's responsibility for each player to know the rules.

The new IT takes the flashlight and announces what he will count to. The number should not be less than 30 and no more than 120 for any reasonably sized yard. IT stands at the base facing a wall or the ground if no wall is nearby. His eyes must be closed, and the flashlight must remain off, until he is finished counting. While counting, IT must announce each number clearly and audibly. He may not count more than one number per second or less than one number per three seconds on average.

As soon as IT announces the last number of his counting session, the round starts. The flashlight can be turned on and players may be tagged.

2.4 In a Round

- ◆ **IT SEARCHES THE YARD FOR AND MAY CATCH OPEN PLAYERS**
- ◆ **OPEN PLAYERS TRY TO GET TO THE BASE OR HELP OTHER PLAYERS**
- ◆ **CLOSED OR FREE PLAYERS MAY WANDER THE YARD FREELY**

During the round, IT searches the entire yard for Open Players, during which IT may tag any Open Players he finds. To tag a player, IT must shine the beam of the flashlight onto the form (clothes, skin, etc.) of an Open Player and simultaneously call out the player's common name. If the name of the player is incorrect or the beam of the flashlight is not on the player, then the player is still Open and may take evasive tactics (more information on tagging may be found in the Glossary). If an Open Player is successfully tagged, he immediately becomes a Closed Player.

If an Open Player touches the Base before being caught, he immediately becomes a Free Player. He *must* have touched the base before being caught; if IT tags an Open Player who is running to the base or even mid-leap jumping at the base the player is Closed and not Free.

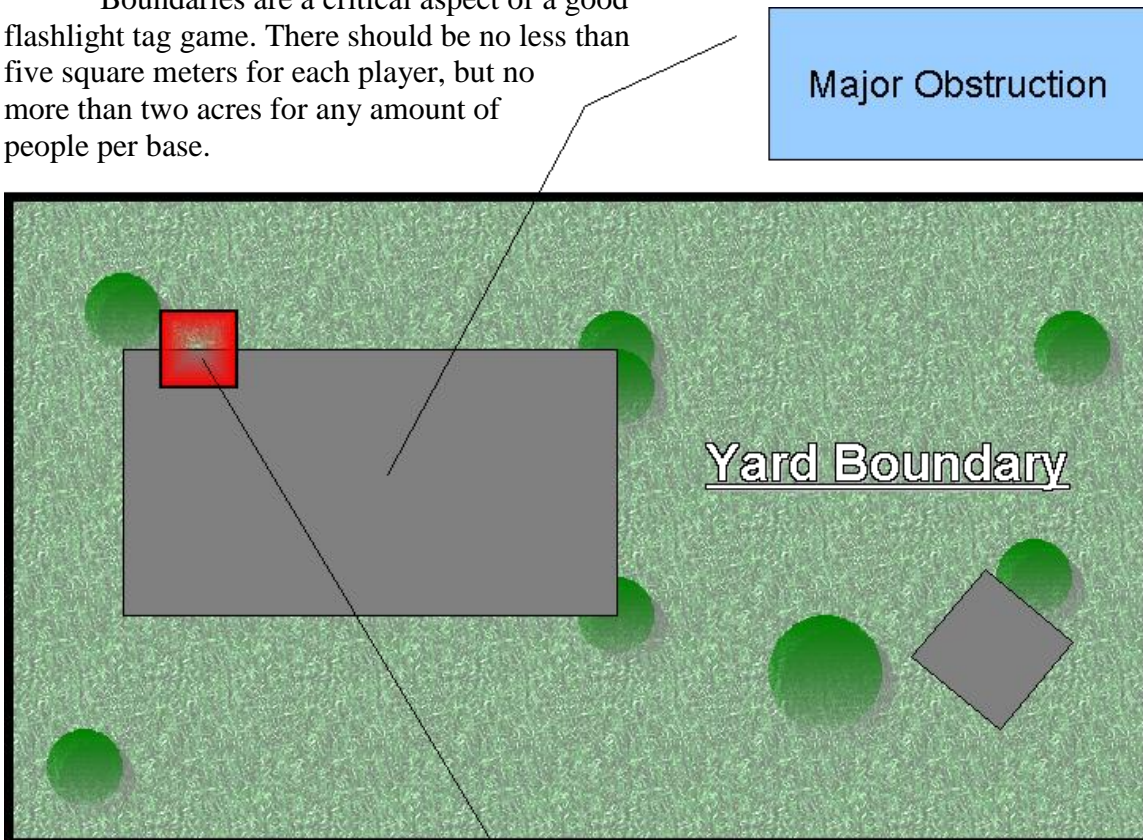
Information on player classifications (Open, Closed, Free) can be found in Appendix B: Player Specifications.

The round ends when either:

- A. IT has tagged at least one open player and is willing to start the next round.
- B. There are no more open players (all players are either Closed or Free).

2.5 Boundaries and Base Locations

Boundaries are a critical aspect of a good flashlight tag game. There should be no less than five square meters for each player, but no more than two acres for any amount of people per base.



Boundaries may be marked by any natural or physical obstruction, although large indicators are better than smaller ones. There should also be a large obstruction near the centre of the location, enabling two to four sectors of play.

Boundaries should usually be rectangular. Irregularly-shaped boundaries can be confusing; if the location is such that regular bounds are impossible, players must be notified specifically and should walk the perimeter of the boundaries. In the image above, the Yard Master's yard is the boundary.

The base must be partly secluded. Specifically, at least one side of the base must not be usable as an entrance (ex. An inset porch has one side (the inset side) blocked off).

However, there should be at least one entrance that is completely free of obstruction. Typically, porches and garages make good bases, while trees or any yard-based obstacle do not.

2.6 Voting, Rulemaking, and Player Consensus

For the purpose of this rule set, a partial consensus will be defined as the majority of the players, while a complete or unanimous decision will be defined as all of the players. The Yard Master, who is expected to be a mature individual, gets no promotion over the other players when vote casting; however, he is the peacekeeper in all situations. During voting, all players are required to honor the Yard Master or speaker and cast their votes quietly. In all situations, adults or moderators have the final authority except in cases of extreme closeness in age to the players (such as only a 2 year difference in age).

For any trivial rule change, such as boundary changes, moving base locations, and switching flashlight tag variations (this is not a comprehensive list), a simple partial consensus will be enacted. The majority wins and the minority is expected to follow graciously.

Major rule changes or administrative decisions require a full unanimous decision or adult intervention/approval. A major change is always a serious pronouncement, such as removing a player from the game for conduct, switching house locations, or concluding a game early (once again, not a comprehensive list).

2.7 Rules of Engagement

The rules of engagement will be referred to as the ROE. This is a comprehensive list of specific actions that are strictly not allowed. Only the Yard Master, an adult, or a moderator is allowed to change the ROE.

1. There will be no shouting or screaming during a game session at night.
2. Loss of temper is strictly not allowed; extreme cases of bad sportsmanship should result in removing the insubordinate player.
3. Intentional disrespect of property by a visiting player is not allowed.
4. Verbal or other profanity is not allowed.
5. Players other than IT may not draw attention to Open players other than themselves.
6. Closed and Free players may not inhibit IT by standing between him and a player, physically contacting him in any way, or preventing/inhibiting actions of the flashlight; they are allowed to distract IT if he has not yet seen or is not pursuing the player they are protecting.
7. Men are expected to be gentlemen; women are expected to be ladies (in conduct, not in playing style).
8. IT may not begin the next round without intentionally notifying all players.

9. Any forms of cruel mockery are strictly not allowed.

2.8 Variations on the Rules

- ◆ GERMAN SPOTLIGHT (SPOTLIGHT, SPECOPS TAG)
- ◆ TREACHERY

In **German Spotlight**, IT must either sit or stand in one position on the base during the entire round. If standing, a consistent foot must be planted solidly on the ground throughout the round. Players must start at a point A, known by IT and all the players, and try to get to a point B, also known by players and IT. Players become Free by touching point B; touching base has no effect on players. Other game play coincides with the official flashlight tag rules.

Treachery involves two flashlights. IT has one, and he secretly gives the other to a player of his choosing. The player with the other flashlight may not tag other players; rather, he is an Open player himself. However, he may not become a Free player when he has possession of the flashlight, nor may he come within ten feet of the base. He can pass the flashlight (along with his status) to another player. IT may tag the player with the flashlight at his own peril. If he does, game play immediately stops and the round restarts. IT is IT again, and he must pick a new secret traitor. The second flashlight must be in one player's possession for the entire round.

There are many, many variations to flashlight tag. If you have one that you believe is worthy of inclusion in the official rules, you may submit it at the email address below (Section 3.1)

3 **Joining KnightGames**

3.1 Founding a Group

- ◆ CONTACT INFORMATION:

- Email: <mailto:flashlighttag@daquell.com>

4 **Disclaimer and Copyright**

This document is © 2008+ Daquell and KnightGames, all rights reserved. KnightGames assumes no liability for any personal injury, damage to personal or public property, prowling, disturbance of the peace, or any other cruel twist the lawyers could throw at us. This document was started on 12/3/2005 and last modified at 6/5/2008.

5 **Appendices**

5.1 Appendix A: Flashlight Standards

A flashlight held to KnightGames standards must have at least candlepower 12,000, about 30 average lumens. Its beam should clearly light at least thirty feet on a

dark night. A 2 or 3 D-battery [MAGLite®](#) is very sufficient (KnightGames does not recommend or disown any particular brand of flashlight). If the beam of the light adjusts from spotlight to full spread, the highest intensity of spotlight is recommended.

Any tournament held by KnightGames will have a flashlight that fits the description above; however, a Yard Master is not breaking the rules if his flashlight does not meet minimum requirements.

5.2 Appendix B: Player Specifications

Open players may do whatever they like as long as they stay within the boundaries of the yard and observe the ROE (section 2.7). Their primary goal is to become a Free player by touching the base; however, they are not required to hide, remain hidden, or even unhide between rounds. Except for the restrictions stated above, there is nothing a Closed player may not do.

Free players have all rights and restrictions of Open players.

6 Glossary

Base: The location that IT counts on and that the Open players are trying to get to

Boundaries: The constraints within which all players and IT must stay during a round

Closed player: A player who was tagged before touching the base

Free player: A player who has touched the base before being tagged

IT: Anyone who has the flashlight and the power to tag a player

KnightGames: An organization for furthering the use of non-obtrusive, recreational games for nighttime play

Open player: A player who has not been tagged and has not touched base

Partial Consensus: The majority of the players agreeing on a subject

Round: The duration of play after IT has finished counting and before the flashlight is handed to another person

Rules of Engagement: Nine rules which must be followed by all players and IT during an entire game session

Tag: When IT has placed the beam of the flashlight on an Open player and simultaneously called out the player's common name. If the player touches the base while his name is being called, the player is still considered tagged, provided IT started calling the player's name before the player touched the base and IT completely finished saying the name afterwards without a break in speech.

Unanimous decision: All players agreeing on a subject

Yard Master: The person who is responsible for the night's game