



# Youth Flag Football Rules (Updated 2/2017)

## I. The Basics

- HOME Team has first possession.

-For Playoffs, the higher seed has the choice

- Each team will be given 4 downs to either make a first down or make a touchdown.
- If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its start line.

-(Indoor) 5-yard line

- For the youngest group (4-5) they will start from the red line.

-(Outdoor) 20 Yard Line

- All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's start line.

-(Outdoor) 20 Yard Line

-(Indoor) 5-yard line,

-Unless a penalty is enforced and the ball is moved accordingly.  
Interceptions may be returned.

- Outdoor: Players must be at least 3 yards off the sideline. The referees can assess a Unsportsmanlike penalty if the players are too close to the sidelines.

- Teams change sides after the first 20 minutes.

-**Possession changes to the Visitor Team** and the clock does not stop.

-(Playoffs, the possession changes to the team who started on Defense)

- There are no kickoffs, and no blocking is allowed.

- Playoffs:

-Ages 4-5 and 6-7 get 8 games and no playoffs

-Ages 8-9, 10-11, 12-13, and 14-17 will have playoffs and seedings will be decided by below.

#### Team rankings:

1. Points for win and tie
2. Head to head.
3. Points against
4. Points For
5. Coin toss

# Youth Flag Football Rules

## II. Players/Game Schedules

- Indoor Rec:6v6 must have a minimum of 5 players to avoid a forfeit.
- Outdoor Competitive/High School Rec:7v7 must have a minimum of 6 players to avoid a forfeit.
- Age Groups are: (Copy of Birth Certificate and/or Picture ID can be required if age of child is in question)

-Recreational: 4-5, 6-7, 8-9, 10-11, 12-13, 14-17\* (\*outside)

Advanced: 6-7, 8-9, 10-11, 12-13, 14-17\* (\*outside)

- High School players can be asked for their photo ID's at any time.
- The Field House can combine ages if needed.
- Players may play up in age divisions but not down into a lower age division.
- Teams generally consist of somewhere between 8 and 12 players, however we do not put a limit on numbers of players allowed on each team.

## III. Timing/Overtime

- Games are played to two- 20 minute halves with a one minute halftime. (Halftime can be shortened if games are behind schedule)

-REGULAR season game can end in a tie.

-If the score is tied at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half, during the playoffs, teams move directly into overtime.

- OVERTIME (for Playoffs)

-Each team has a chance to score.

-College style, with the ball being marked on the RED Line for indoor, and the 20 yard line for Outdoor.

-There is no chance for a 1<sup>st</sup> down, 1st and goal. Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball.

-Each team will have two 30-second time-outs per game. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.

#### **IV. Scoring**

- Touchdown: 6 points

- Extra point: All extra points are running play or pass plays. NO KICKS

-1 point (played from 5-yard line)

-2 points (played from 12-yard line (Outdoor), the RED Line in (Indoor))

- Safety: 2 points

# Youth Flag Football Rules

## V. Running

- The quarterback cannot run with the ball over the line of scrimmage.
- Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Offense may use multiple handoffs.

- Laterals/Pitches are allowed.

-If the ball hits the ground at any time, it will be considered dead at the spot where the ball touched the ground.

-The exception will be, if there is a “Forward Fumble”, the ball will be marked dead where the runner lost possession of the ball, unless the forward fumble lands in the end zone. It will then be treated as a touchback or Safety.

- *A Forward Fumble is defined as a ball that was in player possession and was lost, and it was not a forward pass attempt, and the ball hits the ground in advance of the player who lost player possession.*
- The player who takes the handoff or Lateral can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage. Once the ball has been handed off or Lateraled , all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- Spinning is allowed, but players are not allowed to “Hurdle” an opposing player.
- *Hurdling is defined as jumping while your feet or knees are extended in advance of your body. Any act deemed unsafe by the official can be ruled as a penalty. It is up to the officials to determine,when someone leaves their feet, whether or not it is hurdling.*

- The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's flags are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is. Both flags must cross the line to gain for a 1st down, or the goal line for a touchdown.
- Hand-offs cannot occur between the legs. (No Center Sneak Play)

# Youth Flag Football Rules

## VI. Passing

- \*\* Only 1 forward pass allowed\*\*
- Shovel passes are allowed. Shovel pass is a forward pass.
- Interceptions may be returned.
- There is no time limit on how long the QB has to throw the ball
- All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
- Only one player is allowed in motion at a time.
- *The Quarterback is defined as the person who takes the snap from the center.*
- The Quarterback cannot run with the ball over the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball has crossed the Line of Scrimmage, you cannot come back behind the line of scrimmage and throw a forward pass.

## VII. Dead Balls

- The ball must be snapped between the legs to start play.

- Substitutions may be made on any dead ball, as long as substitution rules are followed properly.
- Play is ruled “dead” when:

- Ball carrier’s flag is pulled
- Ball carrier steps out of bounds (Outdoor)
- Touchdown or safety is scored
- Any part of the Ball Carrier's body touches the ground other than his hands
- Ball carrier’s flag falls out

**\*\*Note:** There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the runner loses possession of the ball\*\*

# Youth Flag Football Rules

## VIII. Rushing the Quarterback

- All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped.
- Any number of players can rush the quarterback.
- Once the ball is handed off or lateraled, the seven-yard rule no longer is in effect, and all defenders may rush the passer.
- A special marker, or the referee, will designate seven yards from the line of scrimmage.
- Remember, no blocking or tackling is allowed.

## IX. Sportsmanship/Roughing

- Coaches will not purposely run up the score.

-Coaches are subject to suspensions if it seen to be an issue with your

team continually running up the score.

- Coaches are responsible for the play of their players and can be suspended along with their players if it is deemed that the players are repeatedly unsportsmanlike.
- If the field monitor or referee witnesses any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game.
- FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.
- Trash talking is illegal.
  - Officials have the right to determine offensive language.
  - Trash talk is talk that may be offensive to officials, opposing players, teams or spectators.
  - If trash talking occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.

### **X.Attire**

- Cleats are allowed, except for metal spikes and screw ins.
- NO POCKETS are allowed in shorts/shirts.
- Inspections must be made before the game starts.
- Coaches are responsible for the equipment their teams wear.



# Youth Flag Football Rules

## XI. Penalties:

- All penalties will be called by the officials in charge of the game.
- Note: Officials have the right to stop the clock in any situation he/she deems necessary.
- Outdoor: Players must be at least 3 yards off the sideline. The referees can assess a Unsportsmanlike penalty if the players are too close to the sidelines.

### A. Defense:

- Encroachment: Five yards and automatic first down
  - Pass Interference: Spot Foul, Automatic 1st down, unless it occurs in the End Zone. In that case, it will be 1st and goal from the 1 yard line.
  - Illegal contact (holding, blocking, etc.):
    - (Outdoor) 10 yards and automatic first down;
    - (Indoor) 5yds and Automatic 1st down
  - Illegal Flag pull (before receiver has ball):
    - (Outdoor) 10 yards and automatic first down;
    - (Indoor) 5yds and Automatic 1st down.
- Please Note, If this foul occurs, and in the official's opinion a touchdown would have been scored, the official can award a Touchdown.**
- Illegal Pass rushing (starting rush from inside 7-yard marker)
    - (Outdoor) 5 yards and automatic first down;
    - (Indoor) 3yds and Automatic 1st down

- Impeding the runner:

-(Outdoor) 10 yards from the spot of the foul and replay the down;

-(Indoor) 5 yards from the spot of the foul or the end of the run, and replay the down.

**-If this foul occurs, and in the official's opinion a touchdown would have been scored, the official can award a touchdown.**

## Youth Flag Football Rules

### B. OFFENSE:

- *For Offensive Spot fouls, the penalty is enforced from the end of the run or the spot of the foul, whichever hurts the offense the most.*

- *Loss of down is defined as the loss of the right to replay the down after a penalty is enforced.*

- *If the spot of a foul on the offense is beyond the line to gain, and the runner legally crossed the line to gain, the penalty would be enforced from that spot and the Offense is awarded the 1<sup>st</sup> down. (It would be 1<sup>st</sup> and goal)*

- Encroachment, False Start, Illegal Motion, Illegal Procedure:

-(Outdoor) Five yards and loss of down.

-(Indoor) 3yds and loss of down

- Pass Interference:

10 yards from the previous spot, loss of down. (Indoor and Outdoor)

- Illegal contact (holding, blocking, etc.): 10 yards from the previous spot and Loss of Down, unless the foul occurs past the Line of scrimmage. It will then be enforced from the end of the run or the spot of the foul, whichever hurts the offense more.
  
- Illegal forward pass (pass thrown beyond line of scrimmage):
  - (Outdoor) 5 yards from the spot of the foul and loss of down.
  - (Indoor) 3yds and loss of down
  
- Offensive pass interference: (illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender)
  - 10 yards from the previous spot and loss of down. (Indoor and Outdoor)
  
- FLAG guarding:
  - (Outdoor) 10 yards (from the spot of the foul) and loss of down.
  - (Indoor) 3yds and loss of down
  
- Delay of game:
  - (Outdoor) 10 yards and loss of down;
  - (Indoor) 5yds and loss of down. Clock will stop under 1 min in game.

# Youth Flag Football Rules

## C. Unsportsmanlike Conduct -15yds

- Penalty will be assessed from the end of the run.
- If the penalty occurs to during a touchdown play, then it is at the referee's discretion whether or not to award a touchdown.

-Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.

-Players/Coaches cannot question any officials' calls/decisions .

-Games cannot end on an accepted penalty, unless the penalty carries a loss of down and/or player safety is a concern.

-Any situation not covered in these rules shall be decided by the game officials.

-All Game official decisions are final.

# Youth Flag Football Rules

## XII.COACHES ON THE FIELD

- Note:All coaches must be registered on the team roster. Photo ID's can be requested to be shown by coaches.

## A.Recreational and Advanced Divisions

- 2 coaches per team are allowed on the field at all times for 4-5 year olds and 6-7 year olds.
- Coaches must be clear of the play before the snap, and cannot affect the play during the down.
- It will be the officials' decision as to what, if any, penalty needs to be called due to coaches' interference.

- 1 coach per team is allowed on the field for the 8-9 and 10-11 divisions.
- The offensive and defensive coach must be against the wall on the player's' side during the down.
- No coach is allowed on the field for ages 12-13 and 14-17.
- Both coaches must move to be in place by the 10 second play count on each down. It is the official's' decision as to whether a penalty will need to be called.
- **IN NO WAY CAN THE DEFENSIVE COACH HOLD UP THE SNAP OF THE BALL.**

-If this means he needs to call his defensive plays from the Bench, then so be it.

-If any coach is deemed to be in the way by the officials, he can be Penalized (Delay of game, unsportsmanlike conduct) and asked to leave the field to coach from the Bench.