



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

2018 FALL RECREATIONAL FLAG FOOTBALL LEAGUE RULES

I. GAME

1. At the start of each game, captains from both teams shall meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who shall start with the ball. At that time referees will make sure all players have mouth guards, confirm ball size specific to age group, and answer questions relating to rules. The visiting team shall call the coin toss.
2. The winner of the coin toss gets first offense possession. The loser of the coin toss chooses the end zone it would prefer to defend. **Teams may not choose to defer to second half choice.**
3. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has three (3) plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three (3) plays to score a touchdown.
4. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on its 5-yard line.
5. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its 5-yard line.
6. All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yard line.
7. Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the loser of the coin toss.

II. TIMING

1. Games are played on a 20 minute continuous clock. The clock stops only for timeouts.
2. Halftime is one minute long.
3. Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.
4. Each team has one 60-second time out per half.
5. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
6. In the event of an injury the clock will stop and then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play.
7. If the score is tied at the end of 40 minutes, the game should be determined a tie (regular season only)!

III. SCORING

1. Touchdown: 6 points

2. PAT (Point After Touchdown) 1 point (5-yard line) or 2 points (12-yard line)

3. Safety: 2 points

a. A Safety occurs when the ball carrier is declared down in his/her own end zone. They can be called down when their flags are pulled by a defensive player, their flag falls out, they step out of bounds or they hit the ground with their knee or arm. A Safety also occurs when there is an offensive penalty in the end zone.

4. A team that scores a touchdown must declare whether they wish to attempt a 1-pt. conversion (from the 5-yard line) or a 2-pt. conversion (from the 12-yard line). Any change, once a decision is made to try for the extra point, requires a charged time out. The PAT decision cannot be changed after a penalty.

IV. COACHES

1. Coaches are allowed on the field to direct players according to need and bracket.

2. Coaches are expected to adhere to YMCA philosophies, coaching guidelines and codes of conduct.

V. LIVE BALL/DEAD BALL

1. The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.

2. A team must have a minimum of four players but no more than five on the field of play.

3. A player who gains possession in the air is considered in bounds as long as one foot comes down in the field of play.

4. The defense may not mimic the offensive team signals, by trying to confuse the offensive players, while the quarterback is calling out signals to start the play.

5. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.

6. Any official can whistle the play dead.

7. Play is ruled "dead" when:

a. The ball hits the ground.

b. The ball carrier's flag is pulled.

c. The ball carrier steps out of bounds.

d. A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored.

e. The ball carrier's knee or arm hits the ground.

f. The ball carrier's flag falls out.

g. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one flag.

h. An inadvertent whistle is performed (at the spot where the ball was whistled dead).

8. In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has two options:

- a. Take the ball where the whistle blown made the play dead.
- b. Replay the down.

Note: There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground.

9. A team is allowed to use a time out to question an official's rule interpretation. If the rule is interpreted incorrectly, the time out will not be charged and the proper ruling will be enforced. Officials should all agree upon any controversial call in order to give each team the full benefit of each call. If the ruling is correct the team will be charged a time out.

VI. RUNNING

1. The ball is spotted where the runner's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball carrier has the ball. If one foot precedes the other, the forward foot marks the spot.

- a. For Line-To-Gain and Goal Lines, the ball AND feet must cross the line.

2. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball, he (quarterback) MUST throw the ball within seven (7) seconds or results in a loss of down. Officials will blow the ball DEAD

3. Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. No direct forward handoff to the center. Center must move back to the side or behind quarterback. Offense may use multiple handoffs.

4. The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.

5. Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping or jumping is considered flag guarding.

6. Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a flag pull.

7. Runners may leave their feet if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid collision with another player without a flag guarding penalty enforced.

8. Players may not create a wall for the ball carrier to shield the defensive players.

9. Flag Obstruction – All jerseys & flag straps MUST be tucked in before play begins. The flags must be on the player's hips and free from obstruction. Obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.

VII. RECEIVING

1. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line). A shuffle pass is legal as long as it crosses the line of scrimmage.

2. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. All motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted towards the line of scrimmage.

3. A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.

4. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
5. Interceptions change the possession of the ball at the point of interception. Interceptions are the only changes of possession that do not start on the 5-yard line.
6. Interceptions are returnable.
7. No hand checking on receivers it will be called interference.

VIII. RUSHING THE PASSER

1. 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. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off, the seven-yard rule is no longer in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
2. A special marker, or the referee, will designate a Rush Line seven yards from the line of scrimmage. Defensive players will verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.
 - a. **A legal rush is:**
 - i. Any rush from a point 7 yards from the defensive line of scrimmage.
 - ii. A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off by the quarterback.
 - iii. If a rusher leaves the rush line early, they may return to the rush line, reset and then legally rush the quarterback.
 - iv. If a rusher leaves the rush line early and the ball is handed off before they cross the line of scrimmage, they may legally rush the quarterback.
 - b. **A penalty may be called if:**
 - i. The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap and crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff or pass – illegal rush (5 yards LOS).
 - ii. Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped.
 - iii. Any defensive player, not lined up at the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed or handed.
 - c. **Special circumstances:**
 - i. If rusher leaves the 7-yard line before the snap, he/she may immediately drop back to act as a defender with no offside penalty enforced.
3. **Players rushing the Quarterback may attempt to block a pass. However, NO contact can be made with the quarterback in any way.**
4. Blocking the pass and then striking the passer will result in a penalty.

5. A sack occurs if the QB's flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball is placed where the QB's feet are when the flag is pulled.
 - a. A safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team's end zone.

IX. FLAG PULLING/BLOCKING

1. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball.
2. **Defenders cannot dive to pull flags (leave your feet), cannot tackle, hold or run through ball carrier when pulling flags.**
3. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball carrier's possession at any time.
4. **If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during the play, the player is down immediately upon possession of the ball and the play ends.**
5. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball.
6. Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping of head, hand, arm or shoulder, or intentionally covering flags with the football or jersey.
7. **BLOCKING is not allowed!**

X. FORMATIONS

1. **An offensive team must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage** (the Center) and up to four players on the line of scrimmage. The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.
 - a. One player at a time may go in motion 1-yard beyond and parallel to the line of scrimmage.
 - b. No motion is allowed towards the line of scrimmage.
2. Offensive players must come to a complete stop for one second before the ball is snapped unless he/she is the one player in motion.
3. Movement by a player who is set or a player who runs toward the line of scrimmage while in motion is considered a false start.
4. The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between his/her legs to a player in the backfield, and the ball must completely leave his/her hands.

XI. UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

1. If the **referee** witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking, or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the referee's discretion. No appeals! **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.**

2. Offensive or confrontational language is illegal. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.
3. Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent or official.
4. Ball carriers MUST make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.
5. Defenders are not allowed to run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
6. Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship:
 - a. Yell to cheer on your players, not to harass officials or other teams.
 - b. Keep comments clean and profanity free.
 - c. Compliment ALL players, not just one child or team.
7. Fans are required to keep fields safe and child friendly:
 - a. Keep younger kids and equipment such as coolers, chairs and tents away from the sidelines.
 - b. Stay on the sideline not between fields.

XII. FIELD & NO RUN ZONES (U10 Division Only)

1. No run zones are in place to prevent teams from conducting power run plays. While in the No Run Zones (a 5 yard imaginary zone before midfield and before the endzone), teams may not run the ball in any fashion. All plays, including those that begin with a handoff, must be pass plays.
2. Each offensive squad approaches only two No Run Zones in each drive (one zone 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down, one zone 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD).

XIII. PENALTIES

i. General:

1. The referee will call all penalties.
2. Referees determine incidental contact.
3. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted (spot fouls).
4. Only the team captain or head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players cannot question judgment calls.
5. Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.
6. Two forms of penalties are assessed: live ball and dead ball. Live ball penalties must be assessed before the play is considered completed.
7. Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal line if the distance to the goal line is less than the penalty yardage.

ii. Defensive spot fouls

Defensive pass interference	Automatic first down
Holding	Automatic first down
Stripping	+10 yards and automatic first down

iii. Offensive spot fouls

Screening, blocking, or running with the	-10 yards and loss of down
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ball	
Charging	-10 yards and loss of down
Flag guarding	-10 yards and loss of down

iv. Defensive penalties

Defensive unnecessary roughness	+10 yards and automatic first down
Defensive unsportsmanlike conduct	+10 yards and automatic first down
Offside	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Illegal rush (Starting rush from inside 7-yard marker)	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Illegal flag pull (Before the receiver has the ball)	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Roughing the passer	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Taunting	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down

v. Offensive penalties

Offensive unnecessary roughness	-10 yards and loss of down
Offensive unsportsmanlike conduct	-10 yards and loss of down
Offside / false start	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal forward pass (Any pass received or lands behind the line of scrimmage or throwing a pass after crossing the line of scrimmage)	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Offensive pass interference	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal motion (More than one person moving)	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Delay of game	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Impeding the rusher	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down