



2021 Flag Football

Rules Book

Grades 5 – 8

PRE GAME

- Teams will have captains meet at midfield for a coin flip
 - Winner will decide whether they want the ball or defense for the first half
 - Other team will chose which direction they want to go when they have the ball during the first half of play
- Game will begin immediately after the coin flip

REGULATION PLAY

- Game will consist of 4 – 10 minute quarters
- Teams will change ends to begin the second half
- Halftime will be 3 minutes
- Offensive team will have 25 seconds to snap the ball once it has been spotted
- No overtime will be played
- Teams will have 2 time outs per half
- Game clock will stop for injuries, time outs and after a score

TEAMS

- All players must be registered with the league to participate
- All players must have a signed Emergency Form to participate
- Teams will have a minimum of 5 players with a maximum of 7 players
- Teams with unregistered players will forfeit their game, potentially the next game, and coach will be suspended for one game
- If a team is late, the game will begin in the 2nd quarter

EQUIPMENT

- Teams must use the NFL flags provided by the YMCA
- Balls must be no smaller than a pee wee size football
- YMCA provides NFL Flags must be worn on the side of the player's hips
- League will provide an NFL jersey that must be worn at each game
- Each player must wear a mouth piece during practices/games
- All shirts must be tucked in
- No pads will be worn
- No jewelry will be worn
- Non steel or metal cleats may be worn

COACHES

- Coaches are volunteers whose role it is to help young athletes learn and enjoy the game of football. Parents are encouraged to support in a positive manner at all times
- Coaches are allowed on the field for every game
- Include all players within the offense
- Must play all players at all positions throughout the season

CONDUCT

- Players are expected to participate displaying the YMCA Core Values of Honesty, Caring, Respect or Responsibility. Players not displaying these values will result in a warning. If it continues, the player will be asked not to play for the remainder of the game, as well as a meeting with the player's family to discuss if the player should be welcome back into the league
- Taunting, profanity, disruptive behavior or offensive language by players, coaches or fans will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty. At that point, the player, coach or fan will be removed from the playing area and will have to observe the game from the parking lot.

OFFENSE PLAY

- Games will be played on a 25 X 60-yard field
- All first downs will be when the offensive team moves the ball to mid field
- If the offensive team crosses mid-field, they will have 4 plays to score a touchdown
- If the offensive team does not gain a first down or touchdown, the defensive team will take over as the offensive team on their own 15-yard line
- Teams will begin with the ball on the 15-yard line
- If there is an interception by the defensive team, the defensive team will take over on offense there the tackle is made
- The ball must be snapped between the centers legs to start a play
- The ball must be snapped where the referee spots the ball
- The result of a bad snap will end in a loss of down. The ball will be placed back to the line of scrimmage
- There is no blocking or screening allowed during any play
 - Offensive players may not run next to the ball carrier at any time
- All passes must be a forward pass
- Shovel passes are allowed
- All players are eligible to receive a pass
- Motion is allowed for one player only
- A player can have no more than 2 offensive touchdowns per game. If a player scores a 3rd offensive touchdown, the player cannot play offense for the remainder of the game, as well as the next game (unlimited touchdowns for High School Division)
- Inside the 10-yard line:
 - If a team is down by more than 2 scores, the offensive team may run the ball
 - If a team is up by more than 2 scores, the team must pass the ball

RUNNING THE BALL

- The quarterback is the player that receives the direct snap from the center.
- Quarterbacks may run the ball
- A running back is the player that receives a handoff
- Any player receiving a hand off behind the line of scrimmage is eligible to run the ball
- No laterals are permitted
- The center is not allowed to run the ball
- Teams must pass in the 'No Run Zone' areas on the field
- If a team is down by more than 2 touchdowns, they may run the ball in the 'No Run Zone'
- There are no 'dive' or 'power runs'
- Ball carriers may not leave their feet at any time when they are running the ball
 - This will be considered a tackle where the player leaves their feet
 - Players who do this may be disqualified from the game
- Spin moves are allowed by the ball carrier

DEAD BALL

- Substitutions may be made on any dead ball
- Play is ruled dead when:
 - The ball touches the ground
 - Fumble
 - Bad snap
 - Ball carrier's flag is pulled
 - Ball carrier steps out of bounds
 - Ball carrier's knee touches the ground
 - Incomplete pass
 - Ball carrier's flags fall off (player must be touched with one or two hands for a completed tackle)
 - Player who starts a play without flags is down where they touch the ball
 - Stiff arm
 - Flag guard
- Defensive player intercepts the ball with one or no flags
 - Player must be touched with one or two hands for a completed tackle
- A team that is up by more than 2 scores may not advance an interception
- Tackle is made where the flag is grabbed
- If there is an inadvertent whistle by the referee, the offensive team has one of two options:
 - Replay the down
 - Resume the next play where the ball was when the inadvertent whistle was blown

OFFENSIVE PENALTIES

- Pushing players to the ground – 5 yards
- False start – 5 yards
- Blocking / Screening – 5 yards
- Pass interference – 5 yards

DEFENSE PLAY

- 7 Yard Rule / Blitz Line
 - Any defensive player who rushes the passer must start a minimum of 7 yards, called the blitz line, off the line of scrimmage
- If the ball is handed off, the 7-yard rule is no longer in effect
- Defensive players inside the blitz line may defend the line of scrimmage
- The Referee will be spot the blitz line for the defensive players
- Rushing the passer
 - There is no minimum number of players that can rush the passer
 - If a defensive player is inside blitz line before the snap, that player can return to the blitz line, then rush the passer
- Defensive players may not strip the ball from an offensive player
- If there is an interception by the defensive team, the defensive team will take over on offense there the tackle is made
- A tackle is made where the flag is pulled
- Players may not leave their feet for a tackle (flag pull)

DEFENSIVE PENALTIES

- Pass Interference – Ball placed at the spot of the foul. Ball will be placed on the 1-yard line if interference is in the end zone.
- Flag guarding – dead ball with a 3-yard penalty
- Rushing the passer inside the blitz line – 7 yards
- Any contact with the passer while throwing the football – 10 yards, automatic 1st down
- Any penalty inside the 10-yard line will result in half the distance to the goal line