



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

Youth Sports

FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

TEAM DUTIES

1. Both teams are responsible for cleaning up their bench immediately after the game.
2. During the game, there shall be a limit of three (3) coaches on the sideline. One (1) head coach and two (2) assistants.
 - a. Only ONE coach is allowed on the field on offense or on defense. Offensive coaches may be in the huddle with their team while the defensive coach must be behind all defensive players. Coaches must not interfere with an active play.
 - b. Coaches on the sideline must remain on their side of the field and may not cross the 50 yard line to the other team's sideline.
3. All spectators must be seated on the sideline opposite the team and cannot stand or sit in the end zone. Only cleared coaches and registered participants allowed on the bench.

SPORTSMANSHIP

1. The YMCA does not keep official game scores or records. However, the score is documented during the game to promote a learning environment.
2. Unsportsmanlike conduct of the players or coaches is not tolerated. If the behavior persists, the individual will be asked to leave the facility.
3. Any player, coach or spectator ejected may be suspended for at least (1) game and/or may be placed on season probation. If ejected again during a program, the individual will be permanently removed. The YMCA leadership will meet to review suspensions and removal. Cases will also be reviewed by the leadership team for reinstatement.
4. If the atmosphere of the game feels unsafe or the YMCAs Values are not being adhered to, the referee or YMCA staff member can end the game.
5. If a team has less than the number of required players, the opposing team will be asked to share players in order to provide competition. We make every effort to play each scheduled game.
6. Coaches are expected to adhere to YMCA Values and are responsible for team actions. This includes parents and players.
7. The YMCA Players and Parents Pledge is required prior to the start of each game. A YMCA Staff will lead the pledge, however in the event a staff member is unavailable, the coach, a parent or player can administer the pledge.

YMCA YOUTH SPORTS KEY PHILOSOPHIES

1. Everyone must play at least half the game.
2. Coaches are volunteers. They are not paid.
3. Our focus is on fun and skill development.
4. Sportsmanship above all.
5. We promote a family atmosphere.

FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

PLAYER SAFETY

1. To protect the safety of all players in the program, any participant wearing a cast will prohibit them from participating in YMCA games or practices. Exceptions can be made with approval from the Sports Director and documented approval from a physician.
2. Soft casts will be permitted with approval from a physician.
3. All types of jewelry (earrings, bracelets, necklaces, etc.) must be removed before the game.
4. Adaptive aids will be approved on a case-by-case basis.

UNIFORM

Each player must wear their YMCA issued jersey. The jersey must be tucked into the player's shorts or pants. The player's shorts or pants cannot have pockets. Hats may not be worn. Additionally, only rubber-soled sneakers or cleated shoes may be worn. Metal cleats and Bulldog cleats (cleat on the front of the shoe) are not permitted.

EQUIPMENT

1. Flags - The YMCA furnished flags must be used. Three flags will be worn (one on each hip and one in the back). Flags may not be wrapped, tied, or tucked around the flag belt and must be in clear view of the defending player. Excess belt material must be wrapped around the belt or tucked in the waistband so as not to have the appearance of a flag.
2. Football Size
 - a. 8 – 9 years = Junior
3. Only kneepads may be worn.
4. Mouth guard is highly recommended but not required.
5. Braces must be inspected and approved by the game official prior to the game.

GAME FIELD

1. Minimum of five (5) and a maximum of seven (7) players on the field.
2. All age groups will play 7-on-7.
3. Games will be played on half of a regulation size field - 45 yards. (53 yards wide - field size can vary based on facilities).
4. Field size may need to be modified depending on space at various YMCA's and outside facilities.
5. The field will be divided into three, 15-yard zones. The offense will have three (3) plays to advance the ball into the next zone to get a first down.
6. In the last zone, teams will have four (4) downs to score a touchdown.
7. There is only one end zone, all drives start at the 45-yard line going in.

COACHES

1. Maximum of three (3) coaches. One (1) head coach and two (2) assistant coaches.
2. Only one coach is allowed on the field for both offense and defense.

FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

3. Players and coaches are the only individuals permitted on the sideline during the game. Players and coaches are to be on one side of the field and spectators and parents on the other side. There will be no coaching from the spectator area.

GENERAL RULES

Each YMCA Flag Football game will consist of four 10-minute quarters. There will be a one (1) minute break after the first quarter and the third quarter. Each game's halftime will be two (2) minutes long. Additionally, three 1-minute timeouts will be awarded per game.

1. SCORING

- Game clock and play clock will stop for touchdowns, safeties, and injuries and will restart when the referees have reset the field and are in place to officiate the game for the following possession.
- Player's hips with both flags attached must cross the goal line.
- Touchdown = 6 points
- Point(s) after Touchdown from the 5-yard line.
- 1 point for a run • 2 points for a pass.

2. STARTING THE GAME

- Each team will provide a team captain.
- A coin toss will determine which team will receive the ball first. The home team will call the toss in the air and select offense, defense, or differ.
- The ball will be given to the team that chooses to play offense.
- Play will start on the 45-yard line.
- Kickoffs are not permitted to start the game.

3. AVOIDING CONTACT

It is the defensive player's responsibility to avoid contact with the offensive player on routes. The ball carrier may not be intentionally pushed or shoved out of bounds. The offensive player may not lower their shoulder/head or stiff arm a defender when running with the football. The offensive player must run around the defender(s), not over or through the defender(s).

4. NO FLAG STRIPPING

The defender may not intentionally pull the flag from an offensive player who does not possess the football.

5. NO STRIPPING THE BALL

Players may not intentionally strip the ball from the ball carrier's arm.

6. NO LUNGING/DIVING FOR FLAG

The player's feet leaving the ground by lunging or diving for the flag is illegal.

FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

7. NO TRIPPING

Tripping or using the leg to stop an offensive player is illegal.

8. FLAG PULLING

- A ball carrier will be down where their flag is pulled.
- Flag guarding, pushing a defenders hands away, stiff-arming, or covering flags is illegal.
- Penalties will be assessed from the spot of the foul.
- Jumping or diving while running with the ball to avoid being stopped by a defensive player or to cross the goal line will be considered flag guarding.
- Jumping to avoid physical contact with other players.

9. BLOCKING IS NOT ALLOWED.

- All players are eligible receivers. Players may not run beside/shield/screen a teammate who is carrying the ball. Screen blocking is illegally obstructing an opponent without contacting him/her with any part of the screen blocker's body.

10. PUNTING IS NOT ALLOWED.

11. NO ROUGHING THE PASSER.

- If a defensive player trying to block a pass contacts the passer's arm, it will constitute roughing the passer. This is the case if the ball is either touched or missed by the defender. Defensive players should go for the flag belt ONLY.

DEFENSE

- The defensive line of scrimmage is one yard in front of the ball.
- All defensive linemen will be in a two-point stance.
- All other defensive players may line up no closer than one yard from the line of scrimmage.
- The rusher may not run over the center or a receiver out on a pass pattern. They must go around the offensive player.
- All players who rush the passer at the snap must be a minimum of seven (7) 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 beyond the line of scrimmage.
- A unique marker, or the referee, will designate a rush line seven yards from the line of scrimmage.
- A legal rush is:
 - Any rush from a point that is seven (7) yards from the defensive line of scrimmage.
 - A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off by the quarterback.

FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

- If a rusher leaves the rush line early (breaks the 7-yard area), they must return to the rush line, reset, and then legally rush the quarterback beyond the line of scrimmage.

OFFENSE

- Any snap that hits the ground will be considered dead and the down is lost (i.e. if the ball hits ground during shotgun snap, that is counted as a down).
- The offensive team has 25 seconds to snap the ball into play AFTER the referee marks the ball ready for play.
Once the ball is snapped, the play is LIVE. All offensive players are eligible ball carriers and receivers.
- All players on offense will be in a two-point stance.
- There will be NO swinging gate formations and no QB sneaks.
- The ball may be snapped by either: (a) the center may turn and hand the ball to QB, (b) a traditional under center snap, or (c) a shotgun.
- At least FOUR (4) players must line up on the line of scrimmage.
- Only ONE player may be in motion when the ball is snapped. All other players must be set prior to the snap of the ball.
- In the case of a fumble, the ball will be marked dead and considered a down of play at the place where the ball touches the ground.
- Interception returns are not permitted. Possession will switch on interceptions - New offense.
- The quarterback (or the player who takes a direct snap from center) cannot run directly up the middle (i.e. no dive plays). QB's can run ONLY when the defense sends a rusher(s) AND that rusher crosses the line of scrimmage. (i.e. no QB runs without a rusher who crosses the line of scrimmage)
- If the defense does not send a rusher, the QB will have 7 seconds to get rid of the ball.

PENALTIES

1. Personal fouls - 10-yard penalty from the line of scrimmage.
 - Personal fouls and unsportsmanlike conduct called by the official will result in a 10-yard penalty. If the foul is called on the offense, the penalty will also result in a loss of down. If the foul is called on the defense, the penalty will be 10 yards and an automatic first down.
 - Personal fouls may be judgment calls by the official and could result in an unsportsmanlike conduct if considered overly aggressive, egregious or malicious. Any personal foul deemed unsportsmanlike will be subject to ejection from the game by the official.
 - Examples of unsportsmanlike conduct penalties include but are not limited to taunting, flagrant contact, swearing, fighting, and using ones voice to deceive the opponent.
- Punching or striking the ball, or striping or attempting to steal the ball from a player in possession.
- Throwing the runner to the ground; may be an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty subject to ejection.
- If the site director or referee witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, or any unsportsmanlike conduct, the game will be stopped, and the player may be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the referee's discretion, and the decision is FINAL.
- Pass interference is deemed a personal foul and its penalty is 10 yards from the line of scrimmage; not a spot foul.

FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

- Bench/sideline unsportsmanlike conduct on the coach or players.
 - Roughing the passer
2. Common Penalties - 5 yard penalty from the line of scrimmage, down replayed if on offense.
- Flag stripping, lunging or diving for the flag- Illegal contact (offensive or defensive)
 - Offsides, blocking/screening, illegal rush, QB 7 second count, QB run without runner crossing line of scrimmage, illegal formation, flag guarding.
 - Exception—defensive holding (i.e. jersey) or illegal contact with the runner (spot foul - 5 yds added to end of run).
 - Exception—offensive flag guarding (spot foul - 5 yds subtracted from the end of run).
 - Everything else will be a 5-yard penalty and the down will be replayed unless the penalty is on the defense and advances the offense into the next zone resulting in a first down.

REFEREES

- The official shall be the sole judge on the field of play. The official's decision is final.
- The official can ask coaches, parents, players, and spectators to leave the field of play or the facilities to maintain a pleasant atmosphere, and control of the game.
- If a coach, player, or spectator, is ejected from a game, that person(s) is automatically removed from the next game and will be reviewed by the Sports Director. Should another incident occur within the same season, the coach, spectator, or player may be ejected from the league permanently.
- The official may stop, suspend, or terminate the game because of the elements of interference.
- There will be no disrespectful words, gestures, or actions toward an official during the game from a player, coach, or spectator.

Resolution Policy (48-hour rule):

We strongly recommend that everyone abide by the 48-hour rule: Unless it is an urgent matter of safety; parents, guardians and/or coaches who are upset regarding a situation or circumstance during a game or practice must wait 48 hours after the incident occurred before approaching the head coach, assistant director or sports director. Give time for emotions to subside, then define the issues thoughtfully and suggest solutions. All discussions and interactions that occur after the 48-hour period must be conducted in a mature, polite, civil, and non-intimidating manner. This includes all forms of communication (face-to-face discussions, emails, etc.). If a resolution is not satisfactory, then the incident will be turned over to the Chief Operations Officer Peter Moody. However, if you feel immediate attention needs to be called to your field during a game, find a director or YMCA staff and proceed in a calm and respectful manner.