

YOUTH FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

PLAYING THE GAME

- A coin toss determines first possession.
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four (4) plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has four (4) plays to score a touchdown. If the offense crosses midfield but fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on its own 5-yard line.
- If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its own the midfield no-run zone.
- Offense can elect to punt on 4th down to have ball placed on the other teams 5-yard line.
- Interceptions start possession at point of interception. Ball is blown dead at point of interception.
- Teams change sides after half time.
- If the defensive team scores a safety, they will take possession of the ball at its own mid-field no-run zone.

PLAYERS/GAME SCHEDULES

- Teams must field a minimum of 6 players at all times. The offense must have 3 linemen.
- All players must play on offense and defense each half. At end of quarter players who have not played offense will play offense and players who haven't played defense will play defense.
- No player will be out more than one possession. No substitutions during series unless due to injury.
- The best players can't stay on the field the whole game. Rotation of players playing time must be equal.

TIMING/OVERTIME

- Games are played to 40 minutes running time in 4th-6th division and 32 minutes in 1st-3rd division. There will be four 10-minute quarters for 4th-6th division and 8-minute quarters for 1st-3rd division, with a 5-minute half time and 1 minute between quarters. Play will be with a running clock.
- During the last two (2) minutes of each half, the clock will stop for incomplete passes, out of bounds runs, scores, penalty enforcement, and change of possession.
- Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.

- If the score is tied at the end of regulation, teams move directly into overtime. The each team will be given one down to score from 10 yard line and repeat until a winner is determined.
- 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.
- Each team has two 30-second times out per half. Timeouts cannot be carried over to the second half. Use them or lose them.

SCORING

Touchdown: 6 points

Extra point: 1 point (played from 5-yard line no-run zone) or 2 points (played from 10-yard line)

Safety: 2 points

RUNNING

- The quarterback cannot run with the ball unless he is being rushed by defense.
- Offense may use multiple handoffs behind the line of scrimmage.
- Absolutely NO handoffs, laterals, or pitches of any kind beyond line of scrimmage.
- “No-running zones,” located 5 yards from each end zone and 5 yards on either side of midfield, are designed to avoid short-yardage, power-running situations. The QB must be the one to pass the ball with no handoffs in a “no run zone”. QB can run if rushed in a “no run zone”.
- The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage. Reception is in “no run zone”. QB must be one to pass in “no run zone” with no handoffs.
- Once the ball has been handed off, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a defensive player (**no diving**).
- The ball is spotted where the ball carrier’s feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.

RECEIVING

- All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage). Exception is in “no run zone”. QB must be one to pass in “no run zone”.
- As in the NFL, only one player is allowed in motion at a time.
- A player must have at least one foot inbound when making a reception.

PASSING

- All passes must be forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage. • Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
- The quarterback has a seven-second “pass clock.” If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, play is dead, loss of down. Once the ball is handed off, the seven-second rule no longer is in effect.
- Interceptions change the possession of the ball at the point of interception.

DEAD BALLS

- The ball must be snapped between the legs, not off to one side, to start play. (except for 1st-3rd)
- Play is ruled “dead” when: — Ball carrier’s flag is pulled. — Ball carrier steps out of bounds. — Touchdown or safety is scored. — At the point of an interception (interception returns are not allowed). — Ball carrier’s knee hits the ground. — Ball carrier’s flag falls out.

Note: There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground. The only exception is on snap to quarterback. The quarterback can pick up the snap and continue the play. Whoever picks up the ball on offense is considered the QB for that play.

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. Excepton in 1st-3rd division only two players can rush quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball is handed off, the seven-yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage. A special marker, or the referee, will designate seven yards from the line of scrimmage. Remember, no physical blocking or tackling is allowed.

SPORTSMANSHIP/ROUGHING

- 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 warned, penalized or ejected from the game as referee determines warranted by the severity of the act. 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.

Note: Please remember that this is a YFFL league and that we are here to have fun and for the kids to enjoy the program. Thank you.

PENALTIES

- The referee will call all penalties.
- Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage.
- Only the team coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations.
- Players cannot question judgment calls.
- Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.

Defense:

1. Offsides 5 yards and repeat down unless penalty places ball beyond mid-field then first down
2. Interference 10 yards and automatic first down
3. Illegal contact 10 yards and automatic first down (holding, blocking, pushing, etc.)
4. Illegal flag pull 10 yards and automatic first down (before receiver has ball)
5. Illegal rushing 5 yards and automatic first down (starting rush from inside 7-yard marker)
6. Roughing the Passer 15 yards and automatic first down (any unnecessary physical contact with the passer)
7. Delay of game Clock stops, 5 yards and repeat down
8. Diving for flag 10 yards and automatic first down

Offense:

1. Illegal motion 5 yards and repeat down (more than one person moving, false start, etc.)
2. Illegal forward pass 5 yards and loss of down (pass received behind line of scrimmage)
3. Offensive pass interference 10 yards and loss of down (illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender)
4. Flag guarding 10 yards (from point of foul) and loss of down
5. Delay of game Clock stops, 5 yards and repeat down
6. Clipping 15 yards and loss of down (block into the back of the opponent) from line of scrimmage or spot if beyond line of scrimmage.
7. Intentional Grounding (throwing the ball to avoid a sack) 5 yards and loss of down
8. Straight Arm 10 yards (extended to ward off an opponent) from spot of foul and loss of down

9. Lowering Head 10 yards (ball carrier may not run over a defensive player) from spot of foul and loss of down

EQUIPMENT & ATTIRE

- Tennis shoes or rubber cleats are allowed. Metal cleats are not permitted. Pre-game inspections must be made.
- **Protective mouthpieces are required.**
- No obstructing clothing may be worn that might harm members of the other team or cover the flags.
- Players must wear the uniform and flags provided by the YFFL during play, no personalized jerseys will be accepted.
- All players must wear a set of flags. Flags should be worn with one flag on left side and one flag on right side of body. A tackle is made by removing a flag and holding it aloft.