

## 7 ON 7 ELIGIBLE Youth Flag Football – Rules and Format

### Rule 1: Fields, Players, and Equipment

#### Section 1: The Field

- Size:
- A. 60 yards from goal to goal
  - B. 15 yards in width
  - C. End zones will vary according to available site space (7-10 yards).

#### Section 2: The Players:

- A. **Line – Up is required five minutes before every game.**
- B. Seven (7) players shall constitute a team. **A team must have SIX (6) players to start and at least five (5) to continue (injury).**
- C. All players must:
  1. Wear tennis shoes, soccer or solid rubber molded cleats (plastic cleats). Metal cleats are not allowed.
  2. Tuck shirts, pinnies, etc., into pants. Jerseys must be all the same color.
  3. Wear belts provided. Flags must be worn on the sides.
  4. Remove all types of jewelry during play.

#### Section 3: The Equipment:

- A. The ball shall be an official ball (Junior 2/3, Youth 4/5).
- B. The official or supervisor shall not allow dangerous or confusing equipment. This will include: 1) projecting metal or other hard substances, 2) finger rings, 3) knee, elbow, or wrist guards of a hard substance (the traditional knee brace, if properly padded with no metal shown, will be allowed), 4) forearm or arm pads, 5) tape or bandage on the hand or forearm unless approved by the official, 6) excessively large shirts, 7) any other pads normally associated with tackle football, 8) **team members cannot wear red or yellow colored shorts or pants or similar colors such as maroon or gold, etc., to camouflage their flags; failure to abide by this rule will result in player/players not being allowed to participate.** 9) **each team is required to wear jerseys that are of the same color.** Officials and supervisors have the final decisions concerning the allow-ability of questionable protective equipment.

### Rule 2: The Game

#### Section 1: Regular Play

- A. In the presence of the two team captains, the official shall toss a coin. The winner has choice of kicking or receiving.
- B. Teams will switch goals at half and 1<sup>st</sup> half team that kicked off will now receive the ball or vice-versa.
- C. Teams on offense have 4 downs to advance to the next first down line or a touchdown.
- D. **An announcement of punts on fourth down is necessary.** No rushing is permitted on punts (no motion until after punt). A blocked quick kick belongs to the team blocking the kick at the spot where the ball first touches the ground following the blocked kick.
- E. Punts that go out of bounds shall be brought in bounds and centered on the field at the point it crosses the sideline.
- F. **“Game Time is Start Time”! Be ready to play at your scheduled time. NO CANCELLATIONS! Report to the site!**

#### Section 2: The Kick Off

- A. **2/3 grade kicks off from midfield (30), 4/5 kicks off from 35**
- B. **Onside Kick**
  - a. No onside kicks.

#### Section 3: Timing

- A. The game consists of two halves, **each 20 minutes in length.** Half time shall be 3 minutes in length.
- B. **Time runs continuous for each half except for legal time outs and during the last one minute of both halves when the clock will stop on all dead ball situations.** The clock will restart as soon as the ball is hiked.
- C. Approximately one minute before the end of each half, the official shall call time and notify the captains of the time remaining.
- D. If time for any period expires during a down, play shall continue until the end of the down.
- E. The attempt for extra point shall be allowed should time expire. During the last one minute of the halves the clock will not run during the attempt for extra point.
- F. Each team is allowed **three time outs per game.** Each time out will be one minute in length, **maximum two per half.**

#### Section 4: Scoring

- A. A touchdown shall count as six points (a touchdown will be scored if the ball breaks the plane of the goal line)
- B. A try for a point after is awarded after a touchdown is scored. A two point conversion from the 10 yard line or a 1 point from the 3-yard line may be attempted. **Defensive team can score on an extra point.** (2 points or 1 point will be awarded to the defensive team, if ball is advanced over the goal line. Points are based off of the offenses declaration of point total for conversion.)

#### Section 5: Tie Game (Tie-Breaker) – **TOURNAMENT ONLY**

- A. A team must score in fewer downs than the previous team did. If both teams end with the same amount of downs, they each get another set of downs.
- B. There will be no extra point attempts. No points scored on the interceptions. Defense cannot score in overtime; it just ends the offensive series.
- C. One time out per team. Unused timeouts do not carry over from regulation play.
- D. A coin flip will determine the choice of offense / defense or end of field choice.

#### Section 6: Substitution

- A. Any number of substitutions may enter the game for either team when the ball is dead.

### Rule 3: Team Play

#### Section 1: Dead Ball: *(Time will stop during the last one minute of both halves)*

- A. The ball is dead and the play is ended under the following conditions:
  - 1. Following a touchdown, point after, safety, or touchback.
  - 2. After an incomplete pass.
  - 3. When the ball carrier goes out of bounds.
  - 4. During a time out
  - 5. Upon change of possession
  - 6. When a penalty has been called
  - 7. **NOTE: CLOCK DOES NOT STOP ON 1<sup>ST</sup> DOWNS, OR ON A BAD SNAP.**
- B. A snap becoming dead in the end zone, on the end zone, or beyond the end zone shall be declared a safety.

#### Section 2: The Scrimmage & Offense

- A. *The offense must hike the ball into play within 25 seconds of the time the official places the ball on the line of scrimmage.*
- B. **All players of the offensive team must remain stationary for one second** before the ball is snapped. One person may start in motion, but this person cannot be on the line of scrimmage and their motion must be away from the line of scrimmage.
- C. The person hiking the ball must:
  - 1. Hike under the legs to a teammate behind the line of scrimmage.
  - 2. Not pick up the ball and replace it on the ground before hiking.
  - 3. Not make a deliberate movement to draw the defense offsides.
- D. **The offense and defense cannot enter or break the plane of the neutral zone (the area 3-ft in front of the ball) until the ball is hiked. An infraction of this rule is offsides. Any player breaking or lining-up in the neutral zone, will be flagged with an immediate whistle (play is called dead for ANY offsides infraction). This penalty can not be declined.**
- E. At least three offensive players must be on the line of scrimmage.
- F. Lateral (backward) passes (overhand or underhand) may be made anywhere on the field and there is no limit to the number that may be attempted in a play or down.
- G. A "double pass" is illegal (loss of down). (A double pass means two forward passes.)
- H. Incomplete forward passes behind the goal line will not be considered touchbacks.
- I. No player may hand the ball off forward of their position on the field to another teammate unless both players are behind the line of scrimmage and before the ball goes forward of the line of scrimmage.
- J. **In running, the ball carrier must attempt to avoid tacklers. Deliberate charging into a defensive player, with or without head down, will result in a penalty of unsportsmanlike conduct (15 YARDS). "Brushing" or other unavoidable contact is not willful charging.**
- K. **Ball carriers may not stiff arm while running or guard their flag in any manner.**
- L. The ball is down at the spot where a flag is pulled.
- M. No player of the offensive team shall make a false start (faking a charge or play). The ball need not be snapped and the penalty for any contact foul by an opponent shall be cancelled. Officials shall stop play immediately for this violation.
- N. One foot down inside the field of play constitutes a legal pass catch.
- O. The ball carrier must return the ball to the closest official after the play is blown dead. Repeated failure to do this may result in a delay of game penalty.
- P. **"Quarterback sneaks" are illegal.** A quarterback may not run forward with the ball from this legal position behind the center.

#### Section 3: Running Plays

- A. The ball carrier may run in any direction, hand off, or lateral anywhere on the field. All handoffs or laterals must be to the rear of the passer beyond the line of scrimmage. If dropped, **the ball is dead at that spot (fumble).**
- B. Blocking: Any player blocking, **MUST BLOCK WITH OPEN HANDS (NO ELBOWS) and keep them in the frame of their body. DROPPING THE SHOULDER AND ELBOW/FOREARM BLOCKING IS ILLEGAL (SAFETY REASONS) AND WILL BE PENALIZED 15 YARDS.** "Flippers" or "Winging" shall be illegal and penalized as unsportsmanlike conduct. Both feet must be in contact with the ground when blocking.
- C. To eliminate some of the physical nature of the game, no runs will be allowed between the guard / center area in their normal starting positions (pulling sweeps are allowed).

#### Section 4: Passing Plays

- A. If a pass goes out of bounds or is not caught, the ball is dead and returns to the previous line of scrimmage.
- B. If a simultaneous catch takes place, the ball is dead and belongs to the offensive team.
- C. A ball which falls from the passer's hand shall be judged accordingly to the following:
  - 1. If there is any forward motion by the arm, the ball is ruled an incomplete forward pass and returned to the line of scrimmage.
  - 2. If there is not forward motion, the ball is ruled a fumble and dead at the spot the ball touches the ground.
- D. Pass Blocking: Any player blocking for the passer, **MUST BLOCK WITH OPEN HANDS (NO ELBOWS) and keep them in the frame of their body. DROPPING THE SHOULDER AND ELBOW/FOREARM BLOCKING IS ILLEGAL (SAFETY REASONS) AND WILL BE PENALIZED 10 YARDS "illegal block."** "Flippers" or "Winging" shall be illegal and penalized as unsportsmanlike conduct. Any contact which results between blockers and the official's judgement of which player has their path or position established. Both feet must be in contact with the ground when blocking.

#### Section 5: The Punt

- A. Will be a "free punt" with 2 receivers back.

- B. If the offensive team desires to announce a punt, the captain should indicate it to the official who then announces the punt to all players. On an announced punt, neither team may cross the line of scrimmage until the ball has been punted. **Ball must be punted IMMEDIATELY, 5 second count by officials.**
- D. The punted ball can be caught on the fly or off the bounce and would be down where the receiver gains control.
- E. If a punt on the fly hits in the end zone and goes through the end zone, the ball is dead and is placed on the 20 yard line.
- F. If the ball goes out of bounds it is put in play in the middle of the field adjacent to the spot it goes out.
- G. If on the hike, the ball touches the ground, players may pick the ball up and kick. This rule is only allowed on punts.

Section 6: "Tackling" (legally pulled flags should be held high in the air.)

- A. A ball carrier is considered tackled when an opponent pulls a flag from their belt. A tackler may not put his arm around or in front of the runner or hold the runner in any manner. Only the flags may be grabbed. Stopping the ball carrier in any manner is to be considered unsportsmanlike conduct and ***WILL BE ENFORCED!*** No tackling is permitted. The penalty is 15 yards from the point of infraction and automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down, unless the officials judge the ball carrier would have scored if there had been no tackle.
- B. **"Pushing" along the sideline if NOT a legal tackle (at any time). PENALTY: UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT**
- C. If a player makes contact with the ground (hand or knee), he will be considered down at point of contact. This is not a deadball situation.

Section 7: Blocking & Stance

- A. No part of the blocker's body except his feet shall be in contact with the ground during the block and rough tactics such as attempting to run over or batter down an opponent must be penalized as unnecessary roughness. (Both feet must be in contact with the ground at all times).  
**Blocking below the waist, cross body, and crab blocking are illegal and will result in a 15 yard penalty.**
- B. The players on the defense **must use their open palms only** to push and shove to get to the ball carrier, but may not tackle or hold a player.
- C. Unsportsmanlike Conduct = The official shall call unsportsmanlike conduct when any player, whether offense or defense, uses rough tactics considered by the official unnecessary in the accomplishment of their legitimate purpose.
- D. Hand and arms must be kept within the frame of the blocker's body.

Section 8: Defensive Pass Interference

- A. **No contact with the receiver is allowed beyond the first five yards from the line of scrimmage**, unless it is a simultaneous effort by both players to get the ball.
- B. **Only one bump within the first 5 yards** is allowed. PENALTY: (10 yards / Automatic first down). OFFICIALS note: "defensive holding" if ball is not in the air.

Section 9: Defense (Use of the hands)

- A. While on defense, **holding an opponent will be penalized ten yards**. EXCEPTION: Use of the hands or arms to ward off an opponent is an actual attempt to get at the runner or the ball.
- B. There will be **NO striking with the fist, locked hands or elbows; kicking, kneeling or meeting with knee; or striking with the heel, backside of the hand on the head, face or neck of an opponent**. PENALTY 15 yards.
- C. **No defensive player may touch the offensive center in any manner until he has passed the ball and moved both feet from his original position and becomes a blocker**. PENALTY: 15 yards
- D. Neither a player, nor a non-player may interfere with the play by any act, which is not specifically provided for in these rules. PENALTY: The referee enforces any penalty he considers justified.

### POINT OF EMPHASIS

1. **PLAYERS MUST TUCK THEIR SHIRTS IN SO THEIR FLAGS ARE ACCESSIBLE.**
2. Stiff arms or covering the flags in any manner is illegal (considered guarding the flag).
3. Pushing along the sidelines IS NOT legal (ejection from game).
4. ALL Fumbles & MUFFS WILL BE CALLED DEAD. The ball will be marked at the point of occurrence. The team receiving / in possession will retain the ball.
5. A double pass is ILLEGAL.
6. Teams have 4 downs to reach the first down line.
7. All teams are required to appoint a team captain before each game. There will be a new captain appointed each week.
8. Any number of players may line up on scrimmage defensively (no requirements).
9. If a receiver's flag unintentionally falls off before he catches a pass, it will be one hand touch.
10. Players should be conscious of wearing flags at the sides of the waist. Officials may whistle a ball carrier down immediately for deliberately placing flags in a non-legal position.
11. Intentionally pulling of an opponent's flag will be deemed *Defensive Pass Interference*.
12. All flags legally pulled from opponent's belt should be held high above their heads.
13. Defense must hand flag back to offensive player, first offense will be warned, second will be flagged for unsportsmanlike conduct.
14. No sideline players, fans or coaches, may go beyond the 20-yd line.
15. A player who is bleeding or has an excessive amount of blood on the uniform shall be considered an injured player and will not be allowed back into the game until the bleeding stops and a blood free jersey is worn.

### TEAM/PLAYER CONDUCT & RESPONSIBILITIES

#### FORFEITS

- A. Officials have the right to stop play when situations get out of hand. In these instances one or both teams may be given a forfeit.

#### LANGUAGE

1. There will be no swearing or foul language used to embarrass the officials, fans, other players, or any persons associated with the play area.
2. Foul language / swearing directed toward an official will not be tolerated. The person / persons / team involved will be ejected from the game and asked to leave the park. If both teams create problems the contest will be declared a double forfeit.
3. Person / Persons / Teams ejected from the game will automatically be suspended from PLAY IN THE NEXT SCHEDULED GAME.
  - OFFICIALS' DECISIONS ON ALL RULES ARE FINAL, NO APPEALS / PROTESTS ALLOWED

#### CONDUCT / FIGHTING

1. Any player who physically attacks or attempts to strike a game official will be barred from any further play.