



Ocean City Recreation & Parks

Youth Flag Football Rules

The Basics:

1. A coin toss determines first possession. Visitor calls toss. Team winning the toss gets the ball to start the 1st half. Team losing toss gets the ball to start the 2nd half. Team not getting the ball the 1st half chooses the goal they defend. The teams change directions for the 2nd half.
2. Offense takes possession of ball at its 5-yard line and has 3 plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three plays to score a touchdown. If offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on its 5-yard line.
3. If offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and opposition starts its drive from its 5-yard line.
4. All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yard line.
5. Teams change sides after the first 15 minutes. (Clock stops for a 3-minute half time)

Players/Game Schedules:

1. Participants must rotate into game every change of possession. Coaches must try to play players equal amount of time.
2. Teams must field a minimum of five players at all times.
3. Teams consist of 10 players – 5 on the field, with 5 substitutes.

Timing:

1. Two 15 minute halves. Running clock.
2. Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Referee will give one warning before a penalty is enforced.
3. Each team has one 30-second time-out per half.
4. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.

Scoring:

- Touchdown – 6 Points
- Extra Point (Interceptions can be returned)
- 1 Point (Played from 5-yard line) or
- 2 Points (Played from 12-yard line)
- Safety – 2 Points

Running:

1. Quarterback cannot run with the ball.
2. Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Offense may use multiple handoffs.
3. "No Running Zones" is 5-yards from end zone. Reduces short-yardage run situations.
4. The player who takes the hand-off can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
5. Once the ball has been handed off, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
6. Any football move by ball carrier to avoid a defender is allowed. (Spinning, juking, sidestepping, cutting and jumping). Players cannot dive headfirst or hurdle a player.
7. The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.
8. Absolutely **NO** laterals or pitches of any kind are allowed.

Receiving:

1. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball is handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
2. As in the NFL, only one player is allowed in motion at a time.
3. A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.

Passing:

1. Shovel passes are allowed.
2. The quarterback has a 7-second "pass clock". If a pass is not thrown within the 7 seconds, play is dead, loss of down. Once the ball is handed off, the 7-second rule no longer is in effect.
3. Interceptions change the possession of the ball at the point the defenders flag is pulled.
4. Interceptions are the only changes of possession that does not start on the 5-yard line.
5. Interceptions are not live when a team leads by 18 points, the ball is dead at the point of the interception of the team leading by 18 or more points and cannot be returned. Interceptions are live for the losing team.

Dead Balls:

1. The ball must be snapped between the legs, not off to one side, to start play.
2. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
3. Play is ruled "dead" when:
 - a. Ball carrier's flag is pulled
 - b. Ball carrier steps out of bounds
 - c. Touchdown or safety is scored
 - d. Ball carrier fumbles the ball
 - e. Ball carrier's knee hits the ground
 - f. Ball carrier's flag falls out
 - g. Player catches the ball and does not have both flags
 - h. If a player catches the ball and does not have both flags. If a player does not have his flags on the side (front or back), the referee may call player down at the point he gets ball. Help referees and make sure that your players flags are on the side and that the belt is tucked in or wrapped around their belt. Shirts must be tucked in.

Fumble Rules: If the center or quarterback fumbles the ball on the initial exchange (i.e. snap), it is not a dead ball. Only the Quarterback can pick up the ball. Only the 2nd fumble counts as a fumble and is a dead ball. The Quarterback cannot run with the ball. He is allowed to scramble without crossing the line of scrimmage.

Rushing the Quarterback:

1. All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of 7 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Defender that is rushing QB is off sides if passing the 7-yard marker prior to the snap.
2. Any number of players can rush the Quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage.
3. Rushers cannot make contact with the Quarterback (hit arm while throwing)
4. Once the ball is handed off, the 7-yard rule no longer is in effect, and all defenders may rush.
5. A special marker will designate seven yards from the line of scrimmage. Remember, no blocking or tackling is allowed.

Illegal Contact:

1. Offense or defensive players cannot run into each other (all players must make an attempt to avoid contact). It is illegal for a player to “intentionally” contact another player.
 - **Examples:** Defender cannot hand check receiver nor can a receiver push defender, no blocking, no colliding with another player, no tackling, no pulling or pushing, pass rushers must avoid contact with quarterback, players must let go of clothing immediately, no pushing or shoving (being clumsy or fast is not an excuse to bring a player down). Official witnessing acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike acts, will stop the game call illegal contact penalize the team 10-yards and do one or all of the following (warn player, team, coach, eject player or coach). Referee notifies League Coordinator of ejections ASAP. Program Supervisor is notified ASAP. Multiple ejections could limit player or coach’s ability to participate in our programs ...Rough play will not be tolerated.

Trash Talk 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 warn or eject the player, coach or fans.

Blocking:

1. Blocking is illegal, contact doesn’t have to take place for it to be illegal. Offensive players can’t move to shield, screen or get in defenders path to ball carrier. Similar to basketball, runners can use teammates who stand still as interference.

Coach and Spectator Conduct/Responsibilities:

1. Coaches, family members, parents and spectators are required to observe the contest from a designated area
2. Participants, coaches, parents and family members must conduct themselves appropriately during league play. Comments or cheers must be positive (not negative) to coaches, players, teams or officials.
3. Misconduct may lead to removal from premises at the discretion of the Staff.
4. Only the head coach can ask the referee questions about rule clarification, interpretations or to watch for perceived rule violations. Players, parents, or fans cannot question judgment calls.

Penalties:

1. Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play. All penalties are assessed from the line of scrimmage.
2. Only a HEAD COACH can ask referee for rule clarification, interpretation or watch for rule violations.
3. Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.

Unsportsmanship Conduct – Player, Coach or Spectator:

1. Warning given to team.
2. 10-yard penalty and loss of down if given to offense or 10-yards and first down if on defense.
3. Referee ask offender to leave property.

Defense Penalties:

1. Interference – 10 yards and automatic first down.
2. Illegal contact (holding, blocking, etc.) 10 yards and automatic first down (Illegal contact preventing a score – (referees opinion) is enforces from point of infraction.)
3. Illegal FLAG pull (before receiver has ball) – 10 yards and automatic first down.
4. Illegal rushing (starting rush from inside 7-yard marker) – 10 yards and automatic 1st down.

Offense Penalties:

1. Illegal motion (more than one person moving, false start, etc) – 5 yards and loss of down (Not called in Pre K – K Division).
2. Illegal forward pass (pass caught behind line of scrimmage) – 5 yards and loss of down.
3. Offensive pass interference (illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender) – 10 yards and loss of down.
4. Illegal contact (holding, blocking, etc.) - 10 yards and loss of down ****(*Blocking is not allowed... offensive players can not move to inhibit defensive players from getting to the ball carrier...an offensive player may stand still while the ball carrier uses them to screen defenders*). (*illegal contact preventing a score is enforced from point of infraction*)
5. FLAG guarding - 10 yards (from line of scrimmage) and loss of down (Referee interprets ball carrier as intentionally using arm / hand to prevent defender from getting flag)
6. Delay of game - Clock stops, 10 yards & loss of down
7. Illegal motion (more than one person moving, false start, etc.) - 5 yards and loss of down

Attire

- Cleats are allowed, except for metal spikes. Official jerseys must be worn and be tucked in.
- All players must wear a protective mouthpiece; there are no exceptions.
- All players are encouraged to wear athletic shorts or sweat pants (cargo shorts & jeans are discouraged for games)

Coaches on the field: One (1) offensive coach allowed on field...must move behind offense prior to each snap of ball (away from action).

One (1) defensive coach allowed on field...must move to sideline prior to each snap of ball (away from action).