

YMCA Jr. Rattlers Football Rules

Attire

- Cleats are allowed, except for metal spikes. Inspections will be made prior to the start of each game and can be made at anytime during a game.
- Every player must wear a protective mouthpiece, NO EXCEPTIONS!
- Official Flag belts must be worn during games. NO EXCEPTIONS! Flags must be worn on each side of the players' hips in line with the hip joint.
- Shirts must be tucked in at all times.

Teams and Start Times

- Each team fields 5 players, they may play with a minimum of 4.
- Teams usually consist of 7-10 players although there may be exceptions.
- Teams are required to report to their assigned field of play by the scheduled start time.

Possession

- Team captains and HEAD coaches must meet the referees at midfield prior to the start of the game.
- A coin toss determines first possession.
- The winner of the coin toss may choose to start on offense or defense.
- The loser of the coin toss may choose the end of the field they wish to defend.
- The team that starts the game on defense will start the second half on offense and vice versa.
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has three plays to cross each first down marker.
- Upon successful conversion of a first down, the offensive team has three additional downs.
- If the offensive team fails to cross a 1st down marker it is a turnover on downs and the other team takes over on their 5-yard line.
- All possession changes, except interceptions, will start on the 5-yard line of the offensive team.

Regulation Play and Clock

- Games are two 20 minute halves.
- Teams change sides after the first half.
- Half-time is 5 minutes long.
- The offensive team has 30 seconds to snap the ball once it has been spotted.
- The offense may snap the ball at anytime after the line judge has signaled the start of the 30 second snap count regardless of the readiness of the defense.
- The referees will generally warn the offensive team when there are 10 seconds and 5 seconds on the play clock.
- Each team has two 60-second time outs per half.

- Throughout the first 18 minutes of each half, the clock will run continuously unless:
 - a time out is called.
 - during the last two minutes of each half, the clock will stop when there is an incomplete pass, a penalty, or when a ball-carrier runs out of bounds provided the two teams are within 16 points on each other.
 - Officials can stop the clock at their discretion. Ex. –injury, pet on field etc.

Overtime

- If the score is tied at the end of regulation, teams move into overtime.
- As in regulation, a coin toss at midfield will determine choice of first possession and end of field to play all overtime possessions.
- Overtime is run just like the NCAA rules of overtime.
- The offensive team starts at the 5-yard line and has three plays to score and then they must go for a conversion. The other team then must match the other team.
- If the teams are tied at the end of each possession then the ball moves back 5 more yards and so on until someone wins.

Conduct

- At the snap, on-field coaches must be 5 yards behind their nearest player.
- Contact is to be limited to that of an incidental nature that is a normal part of flag football.
- Players are expected to behave in a civil manner. Flag slamming, flag throwing, taunting or other uncivil acts will result in a verbal warning for the first offense, and an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty for each subsequent offense.
- Taunting, trash talking, cursing or other offensive language or behavior by players, coaches, or their fans will result in a verbal warning for the first offense and forfeiture for the second offense.
- Tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, roughing, pushing or any action deemed by the referee to be potentially dangerous or harmful will result in immediate player ejection. Two such acts committed by one team during a game will result in forfeiture.

Scoring

- Touchdowns are worth 6 points.
- Extra points are worth 1 point from 5-yard line and 2 points from 12-yard line.
- A safety is worth 2 points
- The defense may return an interception for the points an offense was attempting. This includes extra point attempts and overtime play.

Dead Ball

- Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
- Play is ruled dead when:

- The ball touches the ground. A fumble is spotted where the ball carriers feet were when the ball was lost.
- Ball carrier's flag is pulled.
- Ball carrier steps out of bounds.
- Ball carrier's knee, elbow, hip, or backside touches the ground.
- When a touchdown or extra point is made.

General Rules

- All plays count, penalties will be assessed at the end of the play.
- Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a defensive player.
- Diving or leaping to advance the ball is not allowed. If a player dives or leaps the ball will be marked where the player left their feet.
- The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.
- Any player that steps out of bounds during play must return to the field of play immediately or be penalized for unsportsmanlike conduct.
- Any player that comes onto the field from out of bounds after the play has begun will be penalized for unsportsmanlike conduct.
- If a ball carrier's flag falls out while running, the ball is marked at the spot where the flag came out.
- Defensive players that start a play without a flag can intercept a pass but cannot advance it. The ball is spotted where the interception occurs.
- Any number of offensive players may shift prior to the snap.
- One player on offense is allowed in motion at the snap. The player in motion must be moving parallel to the line of scrimmage or in a backward direction. All other players on offense must be set prior to the snap.

Hiking

- The ball must be snapped between the legs to start the play.
- Center sneak plays are not allowed.
- Ball must be snapped from the midfield spot where the referee places the ball.

Running

- All players receiving a hand-off or a pitch behind the line of scrimmage are eligible to run the ball.
- A player who receives a handoff or pitch can make a forward pass from behind the line of scrimmage provided the forward pass crosses the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball has been handed off or pitched, all defensive players are eligible to rush the ball carrier regardless of their possession prior to the snap.
- No pitches or handoffs are allowed once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage.
- No-Run Zones are located 5 yards from each end zone and 5 yards from midfield.
- If a player missing a flag takes a handoff, the play is ruled dead at the spot of the handoff.

Receiving

- All players are eligible to receive passes including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage.
- If a player missing a flag catches the ball, the play is ruled dead at the spot of the catch. If the reception is made in the endzone, the score will not be allowed and the ball will be placed at the defenses 5 yard line for the next play. Note: As with all other penalties, the play counts. If the disallowed reception was made on 3rd down, the offense turns the ball over on downs.
- A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.
- If a defensive player pulls a receivers flag prior to a legal reception, the defense will be flagged for illegal flag pull. If the receiver makes the catch, the play will remain live until the receivers other flag is pulled. If both flags are pulled illegally and the catch is made, the play remains live until a defender touches the ball carrier with two hands.

Passing

- All passes must be forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage.
- Once a legal forward pass is completed, no other passes, pitches or handoffs are allowed.
- Shovel passes are allowed and subject to all the rules pertaining to forward passes.
- If there is no rush from the defense, the quarterback has 7 seconds to either handoff or pass the ball or the play will be whistled dead.
- Interceptions may be advanced including those made during extra point attempts and overtime.

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. The referee will designate seven yards from the line of scrimmage.
- The rusher is allowed a direct line to the quarterback as long as he rushes from behind at least two yards either side of the 7-yard rushing marker. Contact affecting the play will be ruled offensive blocking. Conversely, a defender rushing from a point within 2 yards of center may not interfere with a receiver. Contact affecting the play will be ruled defensive holding.
- Any number of players can rush the quarterback.
- Rushers are allowed to bat the pass with their hands so long as they don't leave their feet or rough the passer.
- Once the ball is handed off or pitched, the seven-yard rushing rule is no longer in effect, and all defenders are eligible to rush.
- The quarterback is NOT allowed to run the ball. NO QB SNEAKS.

Blocking

- Blocking is not allowed. No player may intentionally make contact with a player from the opposing team with the intent of impeding motion.

Rules Violations

- All plays count! Penalties will be assessed at the end of the play.
- Referees will determine incidental contact that may result from normal play.
- Players cannot question judgment calls.
- Clock stops for any penalty inside of two minutes of each half if the scores are within 16 points of each other.
- Penalties may be declined.
- Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.

Defensive Penalties

All defensive penalties result in an automatic first down

- Offside/Illegal Rush= 5 yards from line of scrimmage
- Pass interference= Ball placed at spot of foul
- Holding/Illegal contact= 5 yards from line of scrimmage
- Illegal flag pull= 5 yards from line of scrimmage.
- Roughing the passer= 10 yards from result of play.

Offensive penalties

All offensive penalties result in an automatic loss of down

- Illegal motion/false start= 5 yards from line of scrimmage
- Illegal forward pass= 5 yards from line of scrimmage
- Offensive pass interference= 10 yards from line of scrimmage.
- Flag guarding/blocking= 10 yards from spot of foul.
- Failure to pass within 7 seconds= Play is whistled dead, no loss of yardage.
- Delay of game= 5 Yards from line of scrimmage.

Field Dimensions

- The football field is 30x70 yards.
- First down at midfield.
- There are 4 no rushing zones located 5 yards from each end zone, and 2 located 5 yards on both sides of midfield.