



YOUTH FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

General Program Information

Uniforms and Equipment

1. All participants will be provided with a uniform which must be worn at all games.
2. Players are recommended to wear a mouth piece; however, they are not mandatory.
3. Rubber Cleated Shoes are recommended, but not required. Metal spike are not allowed.
4. Foam knee pads, elbow pads, or arm pads are allowed, but not required. Players with any type of cast will not be permitted to play.
5. A junior/youth/pee wee sized ball will be used for all games and practices

Players

1. **FIRST AND SECOND GRADE** games will be played 5 on offense and 6 on defense with a park district employee as quarterback for both teams. All players will be eligible to catch the ball.
2. **THIRD GRADE** games will be played 7 vs. 7 with a minimum of 6 players required. If a team is short players, it may borrow players from other teams in the same grade in order to field team and play the game.
3. **FOURTH, FIFTH & SIXTH GRADE** games will be played 7 vs. 7 with a minimum of 6 players required. If a team is short players, it may borrow players from other teams in the same grade or younger order to field team and play the game.

Forfeits

1. Forfeit time is 5 minutes after the scheduled game time. The referee's watch is the official time. Since the focus of the league is to teach the fundamentals of football in a recreational setting, forfeits are highly discouraged. Every effort will be made to play all games.

Scorekeeping/Standings

Scorekeeping and standings will not be tracked for the league.

Practices

Practices are to be scheduled throughout the week by the coach of each team. Coaches will notify the players as to the time and date of each practice.

Rain Outs

1. Games will not be cancelled unless severe weather conditions are present. Call 291-2985 on Saturday morning after 7:30am for a recorded message on the status of games.
2. Games will be held in inclement weather. However, any Park District official has the authority to suspend or cancel any game if weather conditions or field conditions are deemed unsafe. **Suspended or cancelled games are not guaranteed to be rescheduled.**
3. Practices will be cancelled by the coaches. The Park District will reserve the right to cancel practice if the field is deemed unplayable. Otherwise please contact your coach.

Lost and Found

Any items found at Wescott Park will be brought back to the Village Green Offices at 1810 Walters Avenue. Please check with your coach first, as they may pick up articles left behind.

Flag Football Rules

IHSA Boys Football Rules will be in effect with the following modifications. In the event of a conflict between IHSA rules and Northbrook Park District rules, NBPD rules will take precedence. In the event a rule is not listed in NBPD rules, IHSA rules will take precedence.

Equipment

1. 1st and 2nd grade shall use pee wee sized balls.
2. 3rd and 4th grade shall use junior sized balls. 5th & 6th grade shall use youth sized balls.
3. All players must wear the official NBPD jersey during games.
4. All players must wear tennis shoes, or rubber molded cleats. (metal cleats are prohibited)
5. Each player Players must have their shirts tucked in or have a shirt short enough so there is a minimum of 4 inches from the bottom of the shirt to the player's waistline.
6. Helmets, shoulder pads, etc are prohibited.
7. Flag belts must be worn properly so that the flags hang free and clear of obstructions. Belts may not be tied or wrapped to keep from coming off.

Players

Each player must play equal time in every game. A player will be allowed to participate in a game if the player has missed practice, however all players should be encouraged to attend all practices.

The Field

1. 1st and 2nd grade field size is 30 yards wide, 40 yards long, with a 5 yard end zone. First downs will be 10 yards long.
2. The field will be 80 yards long, with 10 yard deep end zones, divided in to four, 20 yard zones. Each zone represents a first down marker.
3. Cones will be set up at the corners of each end zone.

Substitutions

1. Incoming player must be on field before the ball is put in play.
2. Replaced player shall be off the field before the ball is put in play
3. A team allowed an officials timeout for an injured player is restricted to that replacement. The injured player must leave the game for at least one play.
4. A substitute may legally enter the game whenever the ball is dead.
5. No player can enter the field of play once the ball is snapped regardless of the number of players on the field at the time.

Time Factors

1. Length of Game
 - a. The game shall consist of two, twenty-two (22) minute halves.
 - b. A three (3) minute half time break will be allowed.
 - c. Coaches will be notified when there are two minutes left in the half.
2. Stoppage of the Clock
 - a. The clock will be running time during game play.
 - b. During regular game play, the clock shall stop in the following situations:
 - i. Called time outs, either by a team or an official
 - ii. For injuries
 - c. In the final minute of each half, the clock will stop in the following situations:
 - i. If a ball carrier runs out of bounds.
 - ii. after an incomplete pass,
 - iii. after a change in possession,
 - iv. after a penalty, and
 - v. as a result of any situation outlined in rule II-A-2b.

- d. If the clock is ever stopped, for whatever reason, it will begin to run again after the ball is snapped for the next play, or, if after a touchdown, after the ball is received on the ensuing kickoff.
 - e. Time Outs
 - i. Each team will be allowed two, 30 second timeouts per half.
 - ii. Timeouts cannot be carried over from the first half to the second half.
 - iii. Timeouts may be requested by a player or the coach.
 - f. Clock will not stop for 1st/2nd grade unless it is for a time out or a injury.
3. Huddles
- a. Teams will be allowed 40 seconds to huddle, call a play, and initiate the play. The clock will begin with the spot of the ball.
 - b. A 5 yard delay of game penalty will be assessed to teams taking longer than 40 seconds.
 - c. Coaches will be allowed in both defensive and offensive huddles.

Scoring

Scores and standings will not be recorded at any level. Each player will receive a participant award for taking part in the program.

1. Should an individual cross the goal line, the play will end and the ball will be placed on the three yard line for an extra try.
2. After the extra try, the ball will be placed at the 30 yard line and the opposing team takes over possession.
3. No extra point for 1st/2nd grade. The touchdown will count as seven points and the ball placed on the 10 yard line.

Referees

Each game will have at least one referee. Their duties are as follows:

- Make all decisions regarding forfeits and starting games, including starting games on time and calling them after the time limit.
- Settle any disputes between coaches, players, etc.
- Distribute necessary equipment.
- Check fields for safety hazards and make all decisions regarding playing conditions of the field.
- Administer first aid or summon paramedics if necessary.
- Make all rule interpretations, call penalties, control the pace of the game, and any other duty necessary to the completion of the game. All referee decisions will be final.
- One referee will be in charge of the game clock.

Formations

1. Offensive Formation

- a. The offensive team must have at least four players on the line of scrimmage. Other players must be at least one yard back from the line of scrimmage.
- b. The three offensive linemen must be within five yards on either side of the ball. The center must have at least one player on either side of him which are ineligible to catch a pass. The strong side end is eligible or teams can lineup with two ends and both are eligible. The 3 linemen are ineligible for passes.
- c. Ends or split backs may not line up closer than five yards to the side line. Any violation will be called as a dead ball, illegal formation five yard penalty from the line of scrimmage.
- d. No offensive player is required to start in a three or four point stance, but it is permitted.
- e. All players must be still for one second before the ball is snapped, excluding a legal man in motion. Motion is defined as one player running parallel to or back from the line of scrimmage.
- f. 1st/2nd grade must have 3 players on the line of scrimmage, all are eligible to catch passes.

2. Defensive Formation

- a. Four defensive players must line up on the line of scrimmage, within ten yards on either side of the ball.
- b. Three defensive backs can line up anywhere on the field, but must be at least one yard back from the line of scrimmage.
- c. The defense may rush a maximum of three players within five yards on either side of the ball, but are not required to rush any. Additional players may cross the line of scrimmage, but must remain further than five yards from the original spot of the ball (before the snap).
- d. The offensive center may not be blocked until he is in a ready or upright position.
- e. A three second rush will be enforced. The line judge will count the three seconds out loud.
- f. Teams may rush once the ball is handed off or if the quarterback tucks the ball to run. Rush is then automatically allowed.

3. Punt Formation

- a. 1st/2nd grade teams will not punt. They have the choice to go for it or the ball will be placed at the opponents 10 yard line.
- b. Four players are required to be on the line of scrimmage, two may line up no closer than one yard from the line of scrimmage, and the punter must be at least five yards from the center.

- c. Defensive linemen may not rush, but can attempt to block the punt from behind the line of scrimmage.
 - d. Defensive players may not leave the line of scrimmage until the ball is punted.
4. Kick-Off Formation
- a. 1st/2nd grade will not kick the ball off. The ball will be placed at the 10 yard line to start.
 - b. The Kicking Team
 - i. The kicking team must have at least four men on the line of scrimmage, but may have maximum of six.
 - ii. Players cannot cross the line of scrimmage until the ball is kicked.
 - c. Receiving Team
 - i. The defensive team must have at least four men ten yards from the line of scrimmage, but may have a maximum of six.
 - ii. Players ten yards from the line of scrimmage may not leave their spot until after the ball is kicked.
 - iii. No player may be closer than ten yards from the line of scrimmage (five yard penalty and rekick).
 - iv. Receiving backs may begin anywhere on the field.

Kick-Offs

1. The ball is kicked from the forty yard line. The kicking team may not recover a kick-off.
2. If the ball touches a receiver and is not picked up, the ball is dead at that spot.
3. If a receiver mishandles a kick-off, it cannot be run back. The ball is dead at the spot.
4. If the kick-off goes out of bounds, the receiving team accepts the ball at the thirty yard marker.
5. Teams will only kickoff at the start of each half. The team that does not kickoff in the first, kicks off to start the second half.

Punts

1. The offensive team may punt at any time but must be declared.
2. If the defensive team touches the ball, but does not receive it (i.e. catches it), the ball is dead at that spot.
3. If the punt goes out of bounds, the receiving team gains possession at that point.
4. The ball is not declared dead if it touches the ground before it reaches the punter, or is dropped by the punter.

Dead Ball

1. The ball is considered “dead” in the following situations:
 - a. When the ball carrier's flag is pulled, or falls off regardless if accidental or intended.
 - b. When two opposing players simultaneously catch the ball. The offensive team retains possession.
 - c. If any part of the ball carrier's body (other than hands and feet) touch the ground.
 - d. If the ball is fumbled, it belongs to the ball carrier's team at the point of the fumble.
 - e. At any point when the referee blows the whistle, whether intentional or accidental.
 - f. A dead ball results after each play.
 - g. Ball carrier steps out of bounds.

Running Plays

1. Running plays are defined as those which involve a handoff or backwards lateral, originate behind the line of scrimmage, and the ball carrier crosses the line of scrimmage.
2. Teams may use as many running plays in a series of downs as they wish.
3. Ball carriers may not leave their feet at any time (either diving or jumping with the ball).
 - a. If this occurs, the play will be called dead and the ball spotted at the point where the ball carrier left his feet.
 - b. Diving for a first down or a touchdown is not permitted.

Passing Plays

1. Passing plays are defined as those plays that involve one or more forward pass or lateral.
2. Teams may make as many lateral passes they like behind the line of scrimmage. However, only one pass may be made over the line of scrimmage.
3. Teams may initiate as many passing plays in a series of downs as they wish.
4. After receiving the ball, the ball carrier may not leave his feet at any time. However, if attempting to receive a pass, the receiver and defender may leave their feet to catch the ball.
5. Interceptions may be run back.
6. Receivers must have at least one foot touching in bounds to complete a pass.

First Downs

1. Teams will have four downs to advance the ball into the next zone.
2. If the offensive team does not succeed in advancing to the next zone in four downs, the defensive team gains possession at the point where the offensive team last had the ball.

De-Flagging

1. The defensive player only needs to take one flag from the ball carriers belt to stop progress.
2. Diving for a flag is permitted, but for safety reasons, is not encouraged.
3. If the flag falls off at any time for any reason, the ball carrier is considered down.
4. The ball carriers flag must be accessible at all times and in all ways.
 - a. Ball carriers may not tie the flags to the belts.
 - b. Flags must be completely uncovered. This includes by arms, hands, the ball, clothing etc.
5. If it is determined by the referee that the flag was inaccessible, flag guarding will be called.
6. After scoring a touchdown, the referee will remove the ball carriers' flags to make sure no violations occurred. Please instruct your players to cooperate with the officials.
7. When a player is downed, the ball will be spotted at the point where it was when the flag was pulled or fell off.

Dropped Flags

1. Should a player's flag fall off during play in the back field, the ball is dead and spotted at the line of scrimmage.
2. If a player's flag falls off after the line of scrimmage the ball carrier is considered down at the point of the fallen flag.
3. If a player flag falls off before a pass is caught, the player is considered down and the ball is spotted at the point of the catch.

Fumbles

1. The defense may not strip the ball.
2. Fumbles are not free balls. If a ball carrier, after having full possession of the ball, drops the ball to the ground, the play will be whistled dead, and the offensive team retains possession at the spot of the fumble (not where the ball lands).
3. If a ball is fumbled, does not touch the ground, and is caught in the air by any player, the receiving player may run with the ball.

- a. If a teammate catches the fumble, ahead of the original ball carrier, the offensive team retains possession at the point where the ball was fumbled. In other words, the offensive team cannot fumble the ball forward.
 - i. If the referee determines that a fumble forward was intentional, the team will be assessed an illegal forward pass penalty.
 - ii. If the ball is fumbled backwards (not parallel), the receiver may run with the ball.
- b. If the defensive team catches a fumbled ball, they may run the ball back.
- c. Players may not leave their feet to recover a fumble in the air.
- d. If a fumble occurs on fourth down, and the offensive team did not obtain a first down, the opposing team will gain possession at the point of the fumble.

Blocking (players are not allowed to purposely cause contact with one another)

1. All players must remain on their feet, unless incidental contact knocks them down.
2. No two on one blocking down field (defined as ten yards beyond the line of scrimmage).
3. Extending arms to block opponents is not permitted.
4. Blocking shall be done by use of the body without hands or arms. Hands must remain either at a player's side or arms may be crossed across blockers chest in such a way as that the hands do not leave the blocker's body.
5. Offensive players may not use their hands in order to impede the progress of the defender. Illegal use of the hands will be called if this occurs.
6. Defensive players may not use their hands to push offensive player out of the way. Defensive players must run around offensive player while offensive player tries to stay between defensive player and offensive player, i.e., quarterback. A holding call will result if the opponent's jersey is grabbed.
7. Throwing, pushing, or knocking down offensive or defensive linemen is not permitted.

Penalties

1. Offensive Penalties

- a. Offsides/Illegal Formation: any player lined up in the neutral zone (the length of the ball) after the snap, or any end or split back within five yards of the side line. **Dead ball foul, five yard penalty.**
- b. Illegal Motion: A player on the line who moves before the ball is snapped, or makes contact with a defensive player before the ball is snapped, or any back who moves forward before the snap, or more than one back in motion at the same time. **Dead ball foul, five yard penalty.**

- c. Delay of Game: Taking more than 45 seconds to begin the next play, from the time the ball is spotted. **Dead ball foul, five yard penalty.**
 - d. Intentional Grounding: Occurs when the quarterback, or any back in the action of passing the football, throws the ball away to avoid being downed. **Five yard penalty, loss of down.**
 - e. Offensive Pass Interference: Occurs when the offensive receiver physically prevents a defensive player from intercepting the ball by making contact. **Five yard penalty, loss of down.**
 - f. Illegal Forward Pass: Any pass made from ahead of the line of scrimmage. **Five yard penalty, loss of down.**
 - g. Illegal Use of the Hands: Any offensive player who uses his hands in the act of blocking, but not flagrant or intentional. **Five yard penalty from the line of scrimmage.**
 - h. Offensive Holding: defined as grasping the opponents clothing or body, thus preventing movement. Hurling an opponent falls in this category. **Ten yard penalty from the line of scrimmage.**
 - i. Clipping: Defined as blocking a player in the back or blocking at the knees. **Fifteen yard penalty from the line of scrimmage.**
 - j. Illegal Block/Illegal Contact: Any contact in the act of blocking, involving striking with elbows or contact above the shoulders or below the waist, whether flagrant or accidental. **Fifteen yard penalty from the line of scrimmage.**
 - k. Unsportsmanlike Conduct: Any action deemed unsportsmanlike by either referee, including language, flagrant contact, disrespect to officials, or spiking the ball at any time. Includes unnecessary roughness. **Fifteen yard penalty from the original line of scrimmage, loss of down, and possible ejection from the game.**
 - l. Flag Guarding: Any action that prevents the defensive player from taking the ball carrier's flag, including arm swipes and protecting the flag with the ball, hand or arm. **Player is down as the spot of the flag guard.**
2. Defensive Penalties
- a. Offsides: Any player lined up in the neutral zone (the length of the ball) after the snap. **Dead ball foul, five yard penalty, repeat the down.**

- b. Encroachment: Contact with an offensive player before the snap. **Dead ball foul, five yard penalty, repeat the down.**
- c. Too Many Rushers: Occurs when more than three defensive players cross the line of scrimmage within five yards of either side of the ball. **Dead ball foul, five yard penalty, repeat the down.**
- d. Pass Interference: Occurs when the defensive back physically prevents an offensive player from receiving the ball by making contact. **Offensive possession at the spot of the foul, automatic first down (regardless of previous position).**
- e. Holding: defined as grasping the opponents clothing or body, thus preventing movement. Hurling an opponent falls in this category. **Ten yard penalty, repeat the down.**
- f. Unsportsmanlike Conduct: Any action deemed unsportsmanlike by either referee, including language, flagrant contact, disrespect to officials, or spiking the ball at any time. Includes unnecessary roughness. **Fifteen yard penalty from the original line of scrimmage, automatic first down, and possible ejection from the game.**
- g. Tackling (with or without intent): Any time a defensive player physically brings the ball carrier to the ground. **Fifteen yard penalty from the spot of the foul, automatic first down (depending on severity of tackle may cause ejection from game).**
- h. Illegal Block/Illegal Contact: Any contact in the act of blocking, involving striking with elbows or contact above the shoulders or below the waist, whether flagrant or accidental. **Fifteen yard penalty from the line of scrimmage, repeat down.**
- i. Clipping: Defined as blocking a player in the back or blocking at the knees. **Fifteen yard penalty from the line of scrimmage, repeat the down.**

3. Offsetting Penalties

- a. In the event one or more penalties are called against on each team, the penalties cancel out and the down is replayed.
- b. If unsportsmanlike penalties or unnecessary roughness penalties occur after the play is whistled dead, the penalties will be enforced. Players may be ejected if the violations are flagrant.

4. Multiple Penalties

- a. If multiple penalties are called against a team, the opposing team will get to choose which one penalty to enforce.

Miscellaneous

Spinning- Is allowed

Stripping- No defense players are allowed to take the ball out of the ball carriers hand. Defensive attempt must be for the flag only.

Blood Rule

A player with a bloody injury or blood on his/her uniform must leave the game. The player may not return to the game until the wound is no longer bleeding, the wound is covered or the uniform is changed.

End of Game

Opposing coaches and players will shake hands after each game.

Coaches

- Coaches will be permitted to go onto the field all season.
- Only one coach from each team will be allowed on the field at a time.
- Coaches will be given all necessary equipment to run practices.

Rule Changes

The flag football coordinator reserves the right to alter, change, or delete any rule from the program in order to improve the league.