



2021

# Flag Football Rules



# Kaysville City Youth Flag Football Rules- 7 on 7

## **I. Game Rules**

1. At the start of each game, captains from both teams shall meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who shall start with the ball. The visiting team shall call the toss.
2. The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense. The loser of the coin toss has the choice of direction (end zone to defend). Teams may not choose to defend the second half.
3. Teams play with 7 players, but can play with 5 or 6 players. If a team has 4 players or less, it will constitute a forfeit.
4. Players get an equal amount of playing time. Players with less skills play for at least half the game, players with higher skill level should be limited to about half the game to allow other to play.
5. Players should rotate and have the opportunity to play all positions (one player should not play QB the entire duration of the game).
6. The offensive team take possession at their 5 yard line and has four (4) plays to cross midfield. If a team crosses midfield (the line to gain), it has four (4) plays to score a touchdown.
7. If the offensive team fails to cross the line to gain or score, the opposing team takes possession on their 5 yard line. All possession changes except interceptions start on the 5 yard line.

## **II. Equipment**

1. Teams must use a standard size ball for their age group. Kindergarten-4<sup>th</sup> grade will use a Jr size football, 5<sup>th</sup> -9<sup>th</sup> grade will use an intermediate size ball.
2. The city provides each player with an official NFL Flag belt which must be worn during games.
3. Flags must be worn on each side of the players' hips in line with the hip joint.
4. The league provides each player with an Official NFL Flag Football Jersey which must be worn during games. Home teams wear dark jerseys; away teams wear light jerseys. Jerseys MUST be tucked in AT ALL TIMES.
5. Pants or shorts with belt loops or pockets are discouraged and pockets must be taped if worn.
6. Players must wear shoes. Cleats with exposed metal are NOT allowed.
7. Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads, and kneepads. Braces with exposed metal are not allowed.
8. Players must remove all watches, earrings and any other jewelry that the official deems hazardous.
9. All offensive players must have both flags on while on the field of play or face an improper equipment penalty (5 yards from the original line of scrimmage and loss of down). If the flag falls off while in the field of play, this penalty will not be assessed.

## **Teams and eligibility**

1. All players must be registered with the league. Playing with unregistered players will result in immediate forfeiture of all games that the ineligible player played in.
2. Teams are required to report to their assigned field of play by the scheduled start time or face possible forfeiture.

## **Regulation Play and Clock**

1. Game consists of two 20-minute halves. Halftime will be five minutes. Teams change ends to begin the second half.
2. **K-6<sup>th</sup> Grade-** Games are played on a continuous clock. The clock stops only for time-outs.

3. **7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> Grade-** The clock runs during the first 18 minutes of each half unless a time-out is called. During the last 2 minutes of each half, the clock stops when there is an incomplete pass, a penalty, change of possession, or when a ball-carrier runs out of bounds.
4. 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.
5. The offensive team has 30 seconds to snap the ball once it has been spotted. The offense may snap the ball at any time after the line judge has signaled the start of the 30 second snap count whether the defense is ready or not. The referee will warn the offensive team when there are 5 seconds left on the snap count clock.
6. Each team has one 60-second time out per half.
7. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
8. Games can/will end in a tie. No overtime.

## Coaches

1. Coaches are volunteers whose role it is to help young people learn to play and enjoy football. Parents are encouraged to support their youth and their coach at all times.
2. **ONE** Coach in K- 4<sup>th</sup> Grade age divisions are allowed on the field to assist players with their positions. At the snap, on-field coaches must be 5 yards behind their nearest player.
3. Coaches in all other age divisions may not come onto the field of play during a game unless a player is injured. Coaches who come on the field of play anytime during a game could be penalized. One sideline warning per game will be issued after which the following penalties will result:
  - i. Coach on the field during live action: unsportsmanlike conduct
  - ii. Coach on the field during a dead ball: delay of game
4. Coaches are expected to adhere to all NFL FLAG powered by USA Football philosophies, coaching guidelines and codes of conduct.
5. Only the head coach can address the officials.

## Conduct

1. Any and all physical contact is limited to incidental contact that is a normal part of flag football.
2. Players are expected to behave in a civil manner. Flag slamming, flag throwing, or other uncivil acts will result in a verbal warning for the first offense and an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty for each subsequent offense.
3. Taunting, trash talking, cursing, or other offensive language or behavior by players, coaches or their fans will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty for the first offense and forfeiture for the second offense.
4. Reckless play deemed by the referee to be potentially dangerous or harmful (e.g., tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, roughing, pushing, etc.) will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty. Two such acts committed by one player during a game will result in automatic ejection.
5. Play that is deemed by the referee to be intentionally malicious (e.g., clothes lining, blatant tackling with no effort to pull flags, etc.) will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty and immediate player ejection. Two such acts by one team during a game will result in immediate forfeiture and potential league sanctions.
6. Players, teams, or coaches who are found to have intentionally cheated will be suspended indefinitely.
7. Players, coaches, or spectators who are ejected from a game, must vacate the premises. Failure to do so will result in game suspension and forfeiture.
8. Field supervisors and game officials have the authority to suspend play and declare a forfeit if players, fans, and/or coaches behave in a manner that is threatening or dangerous. One "game suspension" warning will be issued.
9. In addition to the penalties assessed during a game, conduct violations may carry additional penalties associated with league participation, and will be determined by league and city officials.
10. For safety reasons, spectators must be seated a minimum of 5 yards from the sidelines.

## Dead Ball

1. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
2. Play is ruled dead when:
  - a. The ball touches the ground
  - b. Ball carrier's flag is pulled
  - c. Ball carrier steps out of bounds
  - d. Ball carrier's knee, elbow, hip, or backside touches the ground
  - e. When a touchdown or extra point is made.

## Spotting the ball

1. The ball is spotted where the ball is when the flag is pulled. The ball has to break the plane of the goal line for it to be considered a touchdown.
2. If a ball carrier's flag falls out while running, or if it otherwise becomes impossible to pull a player's flag, that player can then be marked down by a defender placing both hands on the ball carrier. (two hand touch)
3. Defensive players that start a play without a flag can intercept a pass but cannot advance it. The ball is spotted where the interception occurred.
4. A team with a lead of 28 points or more cannot advance an interception. The ball will be spotted at the point of the interception and possession will be awarded to the intercepting team.
5. The play is ruled dead when the ball makes contact with the ground. In the case of a fumble or muffed snap, the ball is spotted at the forward-most grounded foot of the player who touched it.

## Hiking

1. The ball may either be snapped in between the center's legs or the center can turn and pitch it back to the quarterback, but the play will start when the ball moves, not when the quarterback gets the ball.
2. Center sneak plays are not allowed. Note: A center sneak is any play in which the ball is transferred immediately to the center from the player receiving the snap. A center must take at least one step forward to receive a legal forward pass or one step backward to accept a legal handoff or pitch.
3. The ball can be hiked from the center to any offensive player.
4. The ball must be snapped from the spot where the referee places it.
5. Any number of players may shift prior to the snap but only one player on offense is allowed in motion when the ball is being snapped. There is no minimum number of players on the line of scrimmage, only a center to hike the ball. 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.

## Running

1. Any player receiving a hand-off or a pitch behind the line of scrimmage is eligible to run the ball.
2. A player receiving a backwards pitch or backwards throw can then attempt a forward pass and throw the ball down field, as long as they're still behind the line of scrimmage.
3. The player receiving the snap is eligible to run only after a rusher crosses the line of scrimmage. Whomever receives the hiked ball is the QB. Running is never allowed when a play starts in a no-run zone.
4. Once the ball has been handed off or pitched, all defensive players are eligible to rush the ball carrier regardless of their position prior to the snap.
5. No pitches or handoffs are allowed once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage (no laterals).
6. (3<sup>rd</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> Graders) No-Run Zones are located in the 5 yards before each end zone and center line to gain.. A running play toward the goal line is not allowed when the ball is spotted in the No-Run zone. The only way to advance the ball from the No-Run zone is with a forward pass.
7. The rule related to the No-Run zone does not apply to the Kindergarten-2<sup>nd</sup> grade age groups.

8. If a player missing a flag takes a handoff, the player can be downed by a defensive player placing two hands on him/her (two hand touch).
9. Unlimited amounts of spin moves are allowed by the ball carrier.

## **Passing**

1. All forward passes must be received beyond the line of scrimmage. Note: a forward pass is any ball tossed or thrown overhand or underhand to a player standing in front of the player throwing it.
2. Once a legal forward pass is completed, no other passes, pitches, or handoffs are allowed.
3. A player receiving a backwards pitch or backwards throw can then attempt a forward pass and throw the ball down field, as long as they're still behind the line of scrimmage.
4. Shovel passes are allowed and subject to all the rules pertaining to forward passes.
5. The quarterbacks have 7 seconds to handoff or pass the ball. A violation will result in a loss of down.
6. Interceptions may be advanced including those made during extra point attempts with one exception. Interceptions can be made but not returned when the point differential is 28 points or greater. The intercepting team is awarded possession at the spot of the interception.

## **Receiving**

1. All players are eligible to receive forward passes or pitches.
2. If a player missing a flag catches a ball, the player can be downed by a defensive player placing both hands on him/her (two hand touch)
3. A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.
4. An offensive player who voluntarily runs out of bounds during live action may not return to the field of play until the ball is dead.
5. If a defensive player pulls a receivers flag prior to a legal reception of a pitch or forward pass, the defense will be flagged for illegal flag pull but the play will not be whistled dead. If the receiver catches the pass or pitch, 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 (penalty will be assessed after the play).
6. When a pass is thrown, any player has a right to catch the ball. If in an attempt to catch the ball, a player hinders an opposing player by physical contact (pushing, shoving, slapping, etc.) pass interference will result. Referees will determine incidental contact that is a normal part of flag football.
7. If a ball is simultaneously caught by 2 opposing players, possession will be awarded to the offense with the ball being dead at the spot.
8. Receivers are not allowed to be impeded when going out to receive a pass.

## **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. An official on the field will stand seven yards from the line of scrimmage. Any player who wants to rush the quarterback must start behind that official. Rushers are not allowed to be impeded until they reach the line of scrimmage.
2. Wide receivers that cross the line of scrimmage to go out for a pass cannot be impeded.
3. Any number of players can rush the quarterback.
4. Rushers may jump to block a pass but may not make contact with the QB.
5. If a rusher leaves the rush line prior to the snap, he/she may return to the rush line, reset and then legally rush the quarterback.
6. 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.

7. The player receiving the snap is eligible to run when the rusher crosses the line of scrimmage except in the No-Run zone. If the rusher crossing the line is not an eligible (didn't start behind the 7 yard line) the play will continue, the referee will throw a flag, the player receiving the snap can pass or run. The penalty will be assessed after the play and can be declined by the offense in case of advantage.
8. The quarterback can run the ball when rushed except in the No Run Zone

## Scoring

1. Touchdowns are worth 6 points
2. Extra points are with 1 point from the 5 yard line or 2 points from the 12 yard line.
3. A safety is worth 2 points.
4. The defense may return an interception including extra point attempts during regulation. An interception returned for a score on an extra point attempt is always worth 2 points. The exception is when the defensive team is ahead by 28 or more points in which case the ball is spotted at the point of interception.

## Rule Violations

1. All penalties will be assessed at the end of the play
2. Spinning is allowed
3. 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 his/her feet.
4. Blocking is not allowed. However, a player may set a screen as long as they do not extend their arms and initiate contact. A player may not run into or grab the defender in any way. A player may not extend his/her arms to impede the defender. No pushing or grabbing is allowed.
5. Any player that steps out of bounds during play must return to the field of play immediately or be penalized for illegal participation.
6. Any player that comes onto the field from out of bounds after the play has begun will be penalized for illegal participation.
7. Referees will determine incidental contact that results from normal play. Players must go for the flag; no pushing out of bounds, and no grabbing the ball carrier to enable the easier flag pulling.
8. Players may not question calls. Coaches may not question judgement calls.
9. Penalties may be declined.
10. In the case of offensive and defensive penalties occurring on the same play, the down will be replayed unless one of the infractions was a personal foul. In that case, the personal foul would take precedence over the non-personal foul. Example: a defender interferes with a pass and, following the whistle, the offensive player turns and pushes the defensive player in anger. While both the defense and offense are flagged respectively for pass interference and unsportsmanlike conduct, the offense alone would then be penalized for the personal foul of unsportsmanlike conduct.
11. Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.
12. If a team calls a time-out when it has none left, the official will acknowledge the timeout request but a penalty will be assessed. For the losing team, the penalty is 5 yards and 15 seconds run off the clock. If the game clock has less than 15 seconds when such a time-out is called, the game clock will expire and will result in either half time or game over. For the winning team, the penalty is 5 yards.
13. The ball may not be stripped from the runner. Players need to go for the flags.
14. Flag guarding is when the player with the ball intentionally guards his/her flag by hitting or slapping the defensive players hand away from their flag. Flag guarding can also be hiding the flags under an un-tucked shirt, or tying the flags to the belt so they don't come off.

## General Penalties

1. Roughing/Unsportsmanlike conduct= 10 yards from end of play
2. Delay of game= 5 yards from the original line of scrimmage
3. Too many players on the field= 5 yards from line of scrimmage
4. Illegal pitch= 5 yards from original line of scrimmage or point of infraction if beyond the line of scrimmage.
5. Improper equipment= 5 yards from the original line of scrimmage and loss of down.

When the listed penalty yardage is in excess of half the distance between the goal line and the spot from where the penalty yardage is to begin, the penalty will be "half the distance to the goal line." Example: The original line of scrimmage is 7 yards from the goal line. The defense is flagged for being off-sides. The ball will be moved toward the goal and spotted at the 3 ½ yard mark.

## Offensive Penalties

### All offensive penalties result in an automatic loss of down

**Note:** Loss of down means no repeating of down. An offensive penalty on 1<sup>st</sup> down costs the offensive team yardage plus the 1<sup>st</sup> down play during which the penalty occurred. The next play run by the offense would be 2<sup>nd</sup> down. Penalties on 2<sup>nd</sup> down are followed by a 3<sup>rd</sup> down play. Penalties on 4<sup>th</sup> down plays result in a change of possession. You choose the play or the penalty.

1. Illegal hike/illegal motion/false start= 5 yards from the original line of scrimmage
2. Illegal run in No-Run Zone= 5 yards from original line of scrimmage
3. Illegal forward pass= 5 yards from the original line of scrimmage
4. Offensive pass interference= 5 yards from the original line of scrimmage
5. Flag Guarding/ Blocking= 5 yards from spot of foul
6. Center sneak= 5 yards from the original line of scrimmage
7. Failure to pass within 7 seconds= loss of down only
8. Illegal participation (player enters the field of play after the ball has been snapped)= 5 yards from the original line of scrimmage and loss of downs.

## Defensive Penalties

### All Defensive penalties result in an automatic first down

You choose the play or the penalty

1. Offside/illegal rush= 5 yards from the original of scrimmage
2. Pass interference= Ball places at spot of the foul. In the case of pass interference in the end zone, the ball will be spotted 1 yard from the goal line
3. Holding/Illegal contact/Illegal Flag Pull= 10 yards from the original line of scrimmage
4. Holding an offensive player with the ball= 10 yards from the spot of the foul
5. Illegal participation (player enters the field of play after the ball has been snapped) = 5 yards from the original line of scrimmage and automatic first down.