NFL Flag Football Rules

(Leagues: Co-ed Kindergarten to 9th Grade)

1. **Game Format:**
    a. Official NFL Flag Football rules are used except as amended below.
    b. Jersey Color: The Home team is listed first on the schedule and wear the dark side of the jersey. The Away team will wear the lighter side.
    c. Possession and Direction: Captains/coaches will meet for the coin toss or rock/paper/scissors to determine possession. The visiting team will call the toss. The winner will decide who gets the first possession and the loser will determine the direction.
    d. Timing: Games consist of two 20-minute halves with a running clock with a 3-minute halftime. Teams will change direction at halftime.
    e. Play Clock: Each team will have 40-seconds to snap the ball after it has been spotted.
    f. Clock: The clock will stop in the last two-minutes of the second half on dead balls (incomplete passes, penalties, change of possession, or play going out of bounds. Exception: The clock will continue to run if there is a point difference of 24 or more points.
    g. Time outs: Each team will have three 60-second timeouts per game. Players must stay on the playing field during timeouts.
    h. Players: Teams will play 5v5 on the field. A team may play a game with 4 players.
    i. Forfeit: Any team unable to take the field with 4 players later than five minutes after the scheduled game time will forfeit the game. Forfeits are scored 35 to 0. In case of a forfeit, it is encouraged to divide players up and scrimmage.
    j. Score: The score will be kept by the official for games. Kindergarten no score. 1st-2nd grade will have the score kept, but not recorded. Above 3rd Grade will have scores recorded in QuickScores.
    k. Overtime: There will be no overtime as games can end in a tie.
    l. Weather: Play will occur in inclement weather. Recreation staff will oversee the calling of any games due to lightning. If a game is called after completing a half, it will count as a game played. Otherwise, the game will be rescheduled starting the game anew.
    m. There will not be an end of season tournament.
2. **Playing Field and Equipment:**
    a. Field Dimensions:
        - Kindergarten: 40 x 15 yards with 5-yard endzones and two 15-yard zones.
        - 1st-9th Grade: 70 x 25 yards with 10-yard endzones and two 25-yard zones.
    b. Football Size:
        - Kindergarten to 2nd Grade: Pee Wee (K2) or Blue NFL Flag ball.
        - 3rd-6th Grade: Junior (TDJ) or Brown NFL Flag ball.
        - 7th-9th Grade Girls (TDJ) or Brown NFL Flag ball.
        - 7th-9th Grade: Youth (TDY)
    c. It is recommended that players wear athletic shoes, molded rubber, or plastic cleats. **Metal cleats are not allowed.**
    d. Players must wear their issued NFL Flag belt and jersey. Player's jerseys must be tucked in to avoid getting in the way of the flags. The belt must be worn with a flag on each belt with it fully unfurled. Any excess belt from the waist must be cut off or wrapped around to avoid appearing as a third flag.
    e. It is highly recommended that players wear mouth guards.
    f. Players may wear gloves, elbow or knee pads, sunglasses, beanies, or their jersey over warm clothes. **Braces with exposed metals are not allowed.**

g. Players must remove all watches, earrings, and other jewelry that the officials deem hazardous. Pants or shorts with belt loops or pockets are discouraged.

3. **Coaches:**
   a. Coaches are volunteers whose role is to help young people learn to play and enjoy flag football. Parents are encouraged to always support their youth and their coach.
   b. Each player must play at least half of the game. Every player must sit out at least once during the game unless there are no substitutes.
   c. Two coaches are allowed on the sidelines per team. **Only the head coach is able to address the game officials.**
   d. Coaches on the field:
      - Kindergarten to 2nd grade: One coach is allowed on the field to assist players with their positions. At the snap, offensive on-field coaches **MUST** be 5-yards behind their nearest player. Defensive on-field coaches **MUST** be on the sideline pre-snap.
      - 3rd/4th Grade: One coach on the offense is permitted on the field pre-snap to help their players but **MUST** be off the field prior to the snap of the ball. On defense the coach **MAY NOT** come onto the field of play.
      - 5th-9th Grade: Coaches **MAY NOT** come onto the field of play for offense or defense.

4. **Sportsmanship:**
   a. Coaches are expected to act as role models and will be held accountable for their behavior and the behavior of any assistant coach, players, and parents. Parents are encouraged to always support their youth and their coach.
   b. Unsporting behavior will not be tolerated. This includes berating players, coaches, officials, or spectators. It also includes any form of tobacco use, intoxication, or vulgar language. Contact the site leader or supervisor for any instances of unsporting behavior.
   c. Spectators: Yelling at or harassing (swearing, bullying, intimidating, threatening) game officials, the opposing team's fans, any coaches, or players will not be tolerated. Such behavior may lead to an ejection from the game, forfeiture of the game, or a league suspension/ban.
   d. Ejection: Anyone ejected from the game is required to leave the facility immediately. Refusal to leave will result in a forfeit. Any coach, player, or spectator ejected from a game will be suspended for a minimum of one game and must meet with the program supervisor before they can continue to participate in the program.
   e. League Supervisor has the autonomy to enforce or negate any suspensions.

ALL OGDEN CITY PARKS ARE DRUG-FREE ENVIRONMENTS. NO USE OF TOBACCO, ALCOHOL, OR VAPING IS ALLOWED. SAID PERSON WILL BE ASKED TO LEAVE THE PARK IMMEDIATELY.

NFL Flag Football Rules

(Leagues: Co-ed Kindergarten to 9th Grade)

NFL Flag Rulebook

1. **Overview:**
    a. Possession and direction are determined by coin toss or rock, paper, scissors. Visitor picks calls coin. The winner will pick possession; loser will pick direction.
    b. 1st-9th Grade: The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four (4) downs to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three (3) downs to score a touchdown.
        i. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, on 3 downs, and elect to "punt" on 4th down, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its own 5-yard line. If the offensive team goes for it on 4th down and does not cross field, the opposing team will start its possession from the spot.
        ii. Offensive Teams MUST declare 4th down intent; “Play or Punt”, when asked by the referee and prior to the ‘Ready for Play’.
        iii. Teams may use a timeout only to change the declaration of “Play” at any time prior to the expiration of the play clock.
        iv. If the declaration is “Punt” the ball changes possession and will be placed at the opposing Team’s 5-yard line, 1st down, with NO option to change the declaration.
        v. If the offense fails to score, after crossing midfield the ball changes possession and the new offensive Team starts at its 5-yard line.
2. **Grade Based Bylaws for Kindergarten to 2nd Grade:**
    a. Kindergarten (Instructional):
        i. Coaches will run their practices as well as the games.
        ii. League Structure: The first 4 games will be a 20-minute practice and a 20-minute game. The next 6 games will be at the same timing as the other leagues.
        iii. Game Play: Each team will rotate offense every 5 plays regardless of scoring.
            1. Example: If a team scores on their first play, they will return to midfield and be able to play out their remaining 4 plays. Once a team has used their 5 offensive plays, they will switch and play defense for 5 plays.
    b. Kindergarten to 2nd Grade:
        i. ‘No Run’ zones are eliminated. Teams may run anywhere on the field.
        ii. Defenders may NOT rush the passer unless there is a legal handoff/lateral/pitch executed in the backfield.
        iii. Coaches on the field rule located above.
        iv. If the ball falls to or touches the ground during the initial center to quarterback exchange, the play is ruled a ‘Do Over’ with no loss of down, once per down. On a second consecutive occurrence, the down is consumed.
        v. Defenders MUST line up at least five yards from the line of scrimmage prior to the snap.

3. **Flag Football Terminology:**

Boundary Lines	The outer lines marking the playing field's perimeter, including sidelines and end zones.
Line of Scrimmage	(LOS) an imaginary line running through the point of the football and across the width of the field.
Line-to-Gain	The yard line the offense must reach for a first down.
Rush Line	An imaginary line 7 yards from the line of scrimmage on the defense's side.
Offense	The team with possession of the ball.
Defense	The team trying to stop the offense and regain possession.
Passer	Any offensive player who throws the ball, not just the quarterback.
Rusher	The defensive player who starts from the rush line and tries to pressure the quarterback by either pulling flags or blocking passes.
Live Ball	Refers to the period of time that the play is in action. Generally used in regard to penalties. Live ball penalties are considered part of the play and must be enforced before the down is considered complete.
Dead Ball	The time between plays when no action is occurring.
Whistle	Official's signal to stop play for timeouts, end of plays, or game periods.
Inadvertent Whistle	An official's whistle that is sounded in error.
Charging	When a ball-carrier illegally runs directly into a set defensive player. This includes leading with the head or making contact with shoulder, forearm, or chest.
Flag Guarding	An illegal act when the ball-carrier tries to block defenders from pulling their flags - whether by stiff-arming, dropping their elbow/head, or using the ball itself as a shield.
Shovel Pass	A legal forward pass across the LOS (Underhand, backhand or by pushing the ball forward).
Lateral	A backward or parallel toss of the ball by the ball-carrier.
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	Confrontational or offensive behavior or language.

4. **Scoring:**
    a. Touchdown: 6 points
    b. PAT (point after touchdown):
        i. A team that scores a touchdown must declare whether it wishes to attempt a 1-point conversion (from the 5-yard line) or a 2-point conversion (from the 10-yard line). Any change, once a decision is made to try for the extra point, requires a charged timeout. A decision cannot be changed after a penalty.
        - 1 point: 5-yards line
        - 2 points: 10-yard line

    c. Interceptions returned for scores during regular game play are worth six points, conversions or overtime are worth two points.
    d. **Safety:** 2 points. A safety occurs when the ball-carrier is declared down in his/her own end zone. Runners can be called down when their flags are pulled by a defensive player, a flag falls out, they step out of bounds, their knee or arm touches the ground, a fumble occurs in the end zone or if a snapped ball lands in or beyond the end zone.
5. **Live Ball/Dead Ball**
    a. The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until play is blown dead.
    b. The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage with cones.
        i. It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on defense or offense enters the neutral zone. Regarding the neutral zone, the official may give both teams a "courtesy" neutral zone notification to allow their players to move back behind the line of scrimmage.
    c. A player who gains possession of the ball in the air is considered in bounds as long as the first foot or other body part contacts the ground in the field of play with possession.
    d. The defense may not mimic the offensive team signals by trying to confuse the offensive players, while the quarterback is calling out signals to start the play. This will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty on the head coach.
    e. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
    f. Any official can whistle the play dead.
    g. Play is ruled "dead" when:
        i. The ball hits the ground.
            1. If the ball hits the ground as a result of a snap, backwards pitch or lateral, the ball will be placed where the ball hit the ground.
        ii. The ball-carrier's flag is pulled.
        iii. The ball-carrier steps out of bounds.
        iv. A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored.
        v. The ball-carrier's knee, shin, leg, forearm or arm hits the ground.
        vi. The ball-carrier's flag falls out.
        vii. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one or no flag(s).
        viii. The 7 second pass clock expires.
        ix. Inadvertent whistle
        x. Ball-carrier leaves their feet diving or to hurdle a player. *A player can dive to catch a pass or pull a flag.*
        xi. NOTE: Fumbles/loss of possession: Ground contact must be made for the play to be dead at that spot. A fumble is loss of possession by a player, resulting in the ball contacting the ground.

h. If inadvertent whistle occurs the offense has two options: A) take the ball where the whistle blew, and the down is consumed B) replay the down from the original line of scrimmage. If it occurs on the last play of the half or game, the offense will be awarded one untimed down and given those two options.

i. A team is allowed to use a timeout to question an official's rule interpretation or enforcement (not a judgement call). If the official's ruling is correct, the team will be charged a timeout. If the rule is interpreted incorrectly, the timeout will not be charged, and the proper ruling will be enforced. Officials should all agree upon any controversial call in order to give each team the full benefit of each call.

6. Running:

a. The ball is spotted where the ball is when the flag is pulled.

b. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball across the Line of Scrimmage. The quarterback is the offensive player who receives the snap under center directly or in shotgun formation.

c. Direct handoffs, pitches, and laterals are permitted behind the line of scrimmage only. If this takes place, after the ball carrier crosses the line of scrimmage, the play is to be blown dead by the official. The ball shall be placed at the spot possession was lost for the next play.

   i. **"Center sneak" play is NOT allowed. The QB may NOT handoff, pitch or lateral the ball first to the center.**

   ii. **Any player who receives a handoff, backward pass, pitch or lateral can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.**

   iii. **Once the ball has been handed off, in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, or a backward pass, pitch or lateral has occurred, the 7-second passing clock is eliminated and all defensive players are eligible to rush.**

d. Definition of a "Legal Handoff" - Total loss of possession directly from 1 offensive play to another.

e. Teams are not allowed to run in the 'NO RUN ZONES' - (Reminder: Each offensive team approaches only TWO no-run zones in each drive – one 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down and one 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD).

f. Runners are not permitted to jump, leap or hurdle, in the officials judgement, while advancing the ball. The play is to be blown dead and ball spotted where it was when they left the ground.

g. Ballcarriers may leave their feet and the play will continue for spinning, jump cuts, QB's passing progression or if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid a collision with another player and the play will continue without stoppage. However, if while leaving the ground, contact is made unnecessary roughness penalty may be enforced by the official.

h. No blocking or "screening" is allowed at any time.

i. Offensive players in close proximity of the ball-carrier must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. No running with the ball-carrier.

j. Flag obstruction: All jerseys MUST be tucked in before play begins. The flags must be on the player's hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.

k. Once the ball is advanced beyond the LOS, the current ball-carrier is the only player allowed to have possession of the ball until the play is dead.

7. **Passing:**
    a. Only 1 forward pass, thrown from behind the line of scrimmage, is permitted each offensive play. The ball must be released prior to crossing the line of scrimmage. There can be unlimited backward passes behind the line of scrimmage.
        i. There is no intentional grounding. The quarterback may throw the ball anywhere across the line of scrimmage to avoid a sack.
        ii. All forward passes that do not cross the line of scrimmage are illegal forward passes, unless touched by a defender. All forward passes must go beyond the line of scrimmage.
    b. Shovel passes are allowed and must be a forward pass, from behind the line of scrimmage, and received beyond the line of scrimmage.
    c. All forward passes that do not cross the line of scrimmage are illegal forward passes, unless touched by a defender. All forward passes must go beyond the line of scrimmage.
        i. If the QB is standing in the end zone at the end of the 7-second clock, the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage (LOS).
        ii. If the quarterback throws the ball and then catches it, the play is dead and treated like an incomplete pass.
8. **Receiving:**
    a. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off, pitched or lateraled behind the line of scrimmage).
    b. A player must have at least one foot or other body part in bounds, contacting the ground first with possession.
    c. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
9. **Rushing the Passer:**
    a. All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of 7 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Up to two (2) players can rush the quarterback. Rushers MUST identify themselves by raising their hand before the snap. Rushers MUST rush the passer immediately after the snap. Delayed rush is NOT permitted, by rule. Players not rushing the quarterback can defend the line of scrimmage. Kindergarten to 2nd Grade: Defenders may not rush the passer.
    b. Once the ball is handed off, pitched or lateraled backwards behind the line of scrimmage, all defenders may cross the line of scrimmage to defend and pull the flag.
    c. A special marker, or the referee, will designate a rush line seven yards from the line of scrimmage. Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.
        i. A legal rush is:
            1. Any rush by the 1 or 2 designated players a point 7-yards from the defensive line of scrimmage.
            2. A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off, pitched or thrown backwards by the player receiving the snap.
        ii. A penalty may be called if:

1. The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap and crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff, pitch, lateral or pass – Illegal rush (5-yards from the line of scrimmage and first down).
2. Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped – offsides (5-yards from line of scrimmage and first down).
3. Any defensive player not lined up at the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed, pitched, lateraled or handed off – Illegal rush (5-yards from the line of scrimmage and first down).
4. If the offense draws the identified rusher(s) across the 7 yard marker prior to the snap of the ball, the rusher(s) CANNOT legally rush. Jumping the rush is not a penalty until the rusher crosses the line of scrimmage prior to a handoff, pitch, lateral or forward pass.

iii. Special circumstances:

1. Teams are not required to rush the quarterback with the seven second clock in effect.

d. Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however, contact to the QB, unless ruled incidental by the official, would result in a roughing the passer penalty.

e. The offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has the right to a clear path to the quarterback, regardless of where they line up prior to the snap. The PATH is set pre-snap from the rusher or rushers directly to the QB. PATH does not move once the quarterback moves. If the "path or line" is occupied by a moving offensive player, then it is the offense's responsibility to avoid the rusher. Any disruption to the rusher's path and/or contact will result in an impeding the rusher penalty. **If the offensive player does not move after the snap, then it is the rusher's responsibility to go around the offensive player and to avoid contact.**

f. A sack occurs if the quarterback's flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball will be spotted where possession of the ball is once the flag is pulled.

i. A Safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team's end zone.

10. Flag Pulling:

a. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball-carrier is in full possession of the ball.

b. Defenders can dive to pull flags but cannot tackle, hold or run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.

c. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball-carrier's possession at any time.

d. If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during a play while that player has possession, the player is down immediately and the play ends. The ball is placed where the flag lands.

e. If a player who has one or no flags in their belt takes possession of the ball, the play is dead at that spot on the field.

f. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball.

g. **Flag guarding:** is an attempt by the ball-carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the head, hand, ball, arm or shoulder or intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey. This also may be called if the belts are not on the hips of the player with the ball (referees' judgement).

11. Formations:

a. **Formation:** Offenses must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage (the center) and up to four players on the line of scrimmage. The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage. Players may shift positions on offense at any time, all players must still reset for 1 second, prior to the snap.

b. **Snapping the Ball:** The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion to a player in the backfield, and the ball must completely leave his/her hands. The snap can be between the legs or a side snap. Movement simulating the snap, by a player who is set, is considered a false start.

c. **Motion:** Only one player is allowed in motion when the ball is snapped. The player MUST be in motion, off the line of scrimmage. All motion must be parallel or backwards to the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped.

12. Unsportsmanlike Conduct:

a. If the field monitor or referee witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped, and the player will be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the referee's discretion. No appeals will be considered. INTENTIONAL PHYSICAL PLAY WILL NOT BE PERMITTED!

b. Offensive or confrontational language is NOT allowed. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the officials will determine if a warning or immediate ejection is warranted.

c. Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach or official.

d. Ball-carriers MUST make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.

e. Defenders must give free releases off the line of scrimmage to offensive players and are not allowed to run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags. ROUGH PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED

f. Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship as well:
   i. Yell to cheer on your players, not to harass officials or other teams.
   ii. Keep comments clean and profanity free.
   iii. Compliment ALL players, not just one child or team.

g. Fans are required to keep fields safe and kids friendly and adhere to league requirements for seating:
   i. Keep younger kids and equipment such as coolers, chairs, and tents away from the playing field.
   ii. Dispose of ALL trash in designated trash cans.

h. Unsportsmanlike conduct penalties:
   i. Defense + 10 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down.
   ii. Offense - 10 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down.
   iii. Two (2) unsportsmanlike penalties on any player or coach in a game is automatic disqualification from that game and may lead to additional discipline.

13. Penalties:

a. General
   i. The referee will call all penalties.
   ii. Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
   iii. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted. (Spot fouls)

iv. Only the team captain or head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players may not question calls.
v. Games or halves may not end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.
vi. Penalties are assessed live ball then dead ball. Live ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered complete.
vii. Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.
viii. Spot fouls in end zone: Defensive (Ball on one-yard line, first down)/Offensive (Safety)

ii. Defensive spot fouls

Defensive pass interference	Automatic first down
Holding/Illegal Contact	+5 yards and automatic first down
Stripping	+5 yards and automatic first down

iii. Offensive spot fouls

Screening or blocking	-5 yards and loss of down
Charging	-5 yards and loss of down
Flag guarding	-5 yards and loss of down
Holding/Illegal Contact	-5 yards and loss of down

iv. Defensive penalties

Defensive unnecessary roughness	+10 yards and automatic first down
Defensive unsportsmanlike conduct	+10 yards and automatic first down
Offside / illegal substitution	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Illegal rush (Starting rush from inside 7-yard marker)	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Illegal flag pull (Before the receiver has the ball)	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Roughing the passer	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Taunting	+10 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down

v. Offensive penalties

Offensive unnecessary roughness	-10 yards and loss of down
Offensive unsportsmanlike conduct	-10 yards and loss of down
Offside / false start / illegal substitution	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal forward pass (Any pass received or lands behind the line of scrimmage or throwing a pass after crossing the line of scrimmage)	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Offensive pass interference	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal motion (More than one person moving)	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Delay of game	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Impeding the rusher	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal Procedure	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Taunting	-10 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down