



YOUTH FLAG FOOTBALL 3RD-4TH GRADE DIVISION

Season: Thursday, August 13th - Saturday, September 26th, 2026

Games: 8-game regular season, Games at Vineyard's Grove Park; Thursdays & Saturdays

Grove Park - 350 N. 100 E. Vineyard

Practices: 4+ practices all organized by team coaches and held at any park in Vineyard City

Schedules: All schedules can be found online at www.quickscores.com/vineyardutah.

Standings: No score or standings will be kept by Vineyard Recreation.

Rosters: 9 players max per team (8 teams)

Field Regulations: 80' x 225' with 7.5-yard-deep end zones and four 15-yard first-down zones.

Equipment: Pee-wee size football; Closed-toe shoes required; Cleats optional; No metal cleats.

Referees: Vineyard Recreation will provide 1-3 referee(s) for each game.

Rainouts: Cancellations will be determined at 4pm/8am on gamedays. An email will be sent to all participants **only** if games are cancelled.

Pre-packaged treats are optional and coordinated by parents of the children on each team.
Vineyard Recreation will not provide any scheduled team photos.

For additional questions, please contact Ben King

benk@vineyardutah.gov | 385-338-5280

YOUTH FLAG FOOTBALL 3RD-4TH GRADE DIVISION RULES

1. Official 2026-2027 NFHS (High School) Rules will govern all Vineyard Recreation games with the following exceptions below. NFHS rules, definitions, and interpretations can be clarified by asking Vineyard Recreation. Any rule or scenario not outlined below or defined by NFHS will be left to the discretion of the referee, site supervisor, and/or league coordinator.
2. Coin Toss: Prior to game time, the game referee will check-in with all coaches and ask for 1-2 captains from each team. Coaches should designate a new player(s) on his/her team each game to be the team captain(s). Each team's captain(s) should meet the game referee(s) at the middle of the field. The team captain for the listed away team will call the coin toss. The captain(s) winning the toss will have the option to choose to start on either offense or defense for the first half. The other captain(s) will get to pick the direction they want to score/defend. The opposite will occur for the second half, and teams will switch directions.
3. Playing Time: Games will start at the scheduled game time. Gameplay will consist of two 25-minute halves with a 3-minute break between each half. The game clock will only stop for major injuries and other major delays. Teams will have a 40-second play clock between each play to huddle and start the next play. The play clock will start when the ball is placed. The game clock and play clock will be kept by an official on the field.

Penalty: Delay of Game - 5 Steps from Line of Scrimmage - Replay Down

4. No Forfeits: Games should be played 6v6. However, games will still be played regardless of the number of players that show up, meaning games will be played 5v5 or by swapping players if needed. Please encourage your players to arrive before the scheduled game time.
5. No Timeouts.
6. Substitutions: All players should be wearing their provided flag football T-shirt. Players should have their shirt, and all added clothing, tucked in. **Equal playing time is expected with each player participating in at least 30 minutes of game time.** Please rotate players through different positions. No substitute may enter the game during a play. Any number of eligible substitutes may replace players on the field in-between plays if substitutions are made before the ball becomes live. When the ball is snapped, a team may not have more than six (6) players on the field. **All players, coaches, and parents should be on the sidelines only. A max of two parents / coaches per team are allowed on the field at any time and should avoid interfering with live play.**

Penalty: Illegal Substitution - 5 Steps from Line of Scrimmage - Replay Down

7. Game play: Each half will start with the offensive team having the ball on their own 7.5-yard line. No kickoffs will occur. The offensive team will have up to four plays (downs) to advance the ball past each first-down line, and then the goal line (touchdown). When the offensive team advances the ball across either first-down line, a new series of four downs will be awarded to the offensive team. If a team fails to advance the ball in four plays, the other team will take possession of the ball. Each first-down line may only be gained once during a team's possession. Negative play or penalty yardage that moves the offense backwards does not reset a first-down line.
8. Scoring: The act of advancing the ball across the opponent's goal line will result in a touchdown. Following each touchdown, the scoring team will have one attempt to score from the 3-yard line. After the attempt, the other team will then take possession of the ball at their own 7.5-yard line. No official score will be kept.
9. Line of Scrimmage: The line of scrimmage is an imaginary line that extends from the point of the ball to each sideline. A new line of scrimmage is established by the place of the ball when a runner's flag is pulled. The line of scrimmage marks the progress of the offense across the field. All offensive players must be between the line of scrimmage and the endzone they are defending. All defensive players must be on the opposite side of the line behind the 1-yard neutral zone (marked by a chain). There are no false starts in this league due to movements by offensive players. An offensive player may return to their side of the line any time before the ball is put in play.

Penalty: Offsides - 5 Steps from Line of Scrimmage - Replay Down

10. Starting a Play: All plays will start with a “snap.” A player (the Center) will take the ball from the spot where the ball is placed by the referee and hand or toss the ball **from the ground laterally** to another player (the Quarterback) without leaving their position (the snap cannot go forward across the line of scrimmage). The Center may snap the ball through their legs while facing forward or rotate 90 degrees to snap the ball from their side. He or she may not be fully turned 180 degrees so that his or her back is facing the defense and concealing the ball. Likewise, he or she may not fake the snap by moving the ball and returning it to the ground.

Penalty: Illegal Snap - 5 Steps from Line of Scrimmage - Replay Down

11. Ending a Play: A play will end when one of the following occurs: 1) Any player has possession of the ball and has their flag belt pulled by the defense, 2) a player in possession of the ball has the ball break the plane of the endzone (touchdown), 3) a player in possession of the ball steps out of bounds, 4) any fumble occurs, 5) an incomplete forward pass occurs, or 6) when particular penalties occur (i.e., flag guarding). **If a player in possession of the ball loses their belt for any reason other than being pulled by the defense, the defensive team must touch the player with one hand to end the play (i.e., pulled early by defense before in-possession of the ball or falls off).**
12. Defensive Blitz: No defensive player may cross the line of scrimmage until the ball has **completely left the quarterback’s possession**, or any defensive player who starts behind the designated referee before the ball is snapped may cross the line of scrimmage at any point during the play. The designated referee will stand about eight (8) yards away. A defensive player that crosses the line of scrimmage briefly thinking the ball was handed off, who then quickly returns to their side, and did not affect the play may not be penalized at the referee(s) discretion.

Penalty: Illegal Blitz - 5 Steps from Line of Scrimmage - Replay Down

13. Quarterback Run: The Quarterback (player who receives the snap) may **NOT** advance the ball past the line of scrimmage by running the ball regardless of the defensive team’s decision to blitz or not. At any time, the quarterback is allowed to give the ball to another player via handing the ball, throwing a forward pass, or throwing a backward pass, explained below. The **only** exception to this rule is if the quarterback advances the ball after first giving the ball to another player (i.e., a double pass, reverse, etc.).

Penalty: Illegal Play - No Steps - Loss of Down

14. Players in Motion: Only **one** offensive backfield player may be in motion parallel to the goal line (not toward the goal line) at the snap. All players must start and stay in bounds. All other offensive players must be set when the snap occurs for the motion to be legal.

Penalty: Illegal Play - No Steps - Loss of Down

15. Handing the Ball Forward and Backward: No player may hand the ball forward unless the giver is behind the line of scrimmage. A ball carrier may hand the ball backward at any time.

Penalty: Illegal Handing the Ball Forward - 5 Steps from Point of Infraction - Loss of Down

16. Forward Pass: A forward pass is a live ball thrown toward the opponent’s goal line. All offensive players are eligible to receive a pass. Only **one** forward pass is allowed per play. The passer must have some part of their body behind the vertical plane of the line of scrimmage when the ball is thrown.

Penalty - Illegal Forward Pass - 5 Steps from Point of Infraction - Loss of Down

17. Backward Pass: A backward pass is a live ball thrown towards one’s own endzone or parallel to the passer’s line of scrimmage. The ball may be passed backwards at any time and any number of times by a ball carrier.

18. Completed Pass: A forward and backward pass is completed when caught by any player of the passing team who has at least one foot inbounds prior to making any contact out-of-bounds. A forward pass to a player out-of-bounds will be ruled incomplete. A backward pass to a player out-of-bounds will result in the play stopping at the point the player was out-of-bounds with the new line of scrimmage being established at that point. With a completed pass, the ball is live, and play continues by advancing the ball. If the pass is caught simultaneously by opponents, and the ball remains in both players control when the play ends, the offensive team will retain possession.
19. Incomplete Pass: A forward pass is incomplete when the ball touches the ground or is caught out-of-bounds. A backward pass that touches the ground will be ruled dead and belong to the passing team at the spot the ball hits the ground.
20. Intentional Grounding: A pass intentionally thrown into an area not occupied by an eligible receiver or thrown incomplete to save loss of yardage is considered intentional grounding. Intentional grounding will not be called if the passer is outside of the hashmarks away from the center of the field and throws the ball beyond the line of scrimmage and beyond the sideline.

Penalty: Intentional Grounding - 5 Steps from Line of Scrimmage - Loss of Down

21. Ineligible Receiver: A player who independently goes out-of-bounds loses his eligibility to receive a pass until the ball has been touched by an opponent.

Penalty: Illegal Touching - 5 Steps from Line of Scrimmage - Loss of Down

22. Roughing the Passer: Defensive players blitzing the passer may not make any contact with the thrower's upper body or arm as he or she releases the ball for a pass. Likewise, contact with the ball is only legal if made after the ball is released. Pulling the flag is the preferred method of stopping the thrower.

Penalty - Roughing the Passer - 10 Steps from Line of Scrimmage - Replay Down

23. Pass Interference: The defense may not hold, trip, push, impede, or interfere by contact with the offensive receiver in his or her attempt to catch a thrown ball. Similarly, the offense may not do likewise to interfere by contact with a defensive player's attempt to catch a thrown ball. Contact by a player that interferes with a receiver or defender is pass interference, except when two or more players make a simultaneous and bona fide attempt to reach, catch, or bat the pass in legal position.

Penalty:

Defensive Pass Interference - 5 or 10 Steps (depends on severity) from Line of Scrimmage - Replay Down

Offensive Pass Interference - 5 or 10 Steps (depends on severity) from Line of Scrimmage - Loss of Down

24. Interception: A completed pass to the defense is an interception and may be advanced by the ball carrier.
25. Fumble: A fumble occurs when an offensive player drops the ball after establishing clear possession, a backward pass hits the ground at any point, a dropped handoff occurs, or a snap hits the ground. A fumble may be caught in flight before hitting the ground and can be advanced. However, once a fumble touches the ground, the offense will retain possession (unless a turnover on downs occurs) at the point of contact with the ground or at the point possession was lost (whichever prevents the most advancement).
26. Option to "Punt": On 4th down, a team may elect to "punt" the ball and give possession to the other team. The team must announce to the referee(s) their intent to utilize this option before starting their fourth-down play. The ball will change possession, and the opposing team will then start on their own 7.5-yard line.
27. Ball Carrier: A ball carrier may not stiff-arm, jump over defensive players, or run through defensive players. A ball carrier may dive, jump (juke), or spin in a controlled manner that is not deemed excessive or dangerous to the

other players on the field. Jumping into defenders or consecutively spinning is considered dangerous. The ball carrier cannot protect his or her flag belt in any manner or hold the belt to prevent an opponent from pulling the flag. A ball carrier must have their jersey, and all added clothing, tucked inside their pants so the flag belt can be worn at the waist and clearly seen by the opponents and referee(s). The flag belt should be worn so that a flag is positioned in the back and on each side of the player.

NOTE: This rule should be enforced as follows: If an infraction is noticed before a snap, the referee shall warn the offending team. When a play is in progress, if for any reason it becomes difficult or impossible to pull the flags **(because of the carrier's own intent or responsibility)**, the referee(s) should blow the play dead **at the first pull attempt**. If the scenario is not because of the carrier's own intent, the play should be allowed to continue (i.e., a defender grabs the shirt of the ball carrier to which it is now untucked and covering the flags).

Penalty: Flag Guarding - Blown Dead at Point of Infraction with First Pull Attempt

28. Removing the Flag: A defender may not hold, pull down, run through, trip, or push a ball carrier at any point. A defender may not deliberately pull the flag of any player not in possession of the ball. A defender may not knock or steal the ball out of a ball carrier's hands or attempt to do so. A defender may not grab the jersey or clothing of an opposing player.

Penalty: Holding / Tackling - 5 or 10 Steps (depends on severity) from Point of Infraction

29. Inadvertent Whistle: If the referee blows his/her whistle by mistake, the ball shall be placed at the spot of the ball when the whistle was inadvertently blown and the down counted, or the down may be replayed at the discretion of the offensive team (or the defensive team if a change of possession occurred before the inadvertent whistle).
30. Spotting the Ball: The ball will be spotted by the referee(s) judgement at the location of the ball when the ball carrier's flag is pulled.
31. Blocking: Blocking is legally obstructing an opponent's path with the blocker's body. In all instances, a blocker must be on his or her feet during a block. If while attempting a block, the blocker unintentionally loses his or her balance and falls or leaves his or her feet, the referee(s), at their discretion, may rule it incidental to the block and not an illegal block. **A blocker must have their hands and forearms next to their body and below their shoulders while blocking (crossed over chest, to the side, or behind back)**. Likewise, the blocker must keep their hands and forearms below the shoulders of their opponent while blocking. The blocker may not extend their arms, run over, push, pull, hold, trip, shoulder, or elbow a defender in any manner to impede the defense. Minor contact may occur but should not be initiated. A flag football block is like playing defense in basketball – limited contact and establishing position by moving one's feet to get to a spot first.

Penalty: Illegal Block (Offense) -

5 or 10 Steps (depends on severity) from Line of Scrimmage if occurred behind line - Replay Down

5 or 10 Steps (depends on severity) from Point of Infraction if occurred beyond line of scrimmage - Loss of Down

32. Defensive Use of Hands: Defensive players may not extend their arms, run over, push, pull, hold, trip, shoulder, or elbow an offensive player in their attempt to get around a block or to get to a ball carrier's flag. They should avoid contact. They may use their hands for protection or to keep their balance.

Penalty: Illegal Use of Hands (Defense) -

5 or 10 Steps (depends on severity) from Line of Scrimmage if occurred behind line

5 or 10 Steps (depends on severity) from Point of Infraction if occurred beyond line of scrimmage

33. No Hideouts: A hideout is a player who is trying to 1) conceal himself or be concealed by teammates on or off the field, or 2) pretending to substitute another player and remaining or returning to the field to deceive the defense. This play will be ruled illegal and result in a loss of down.

Penalty: Illegal Play - No Steps - Loss of Down

34. No Flying Wedge or Wall Formations: Any play that attempts to create a wall of players (3 or more) tightly together to create a blockade for a runner will be ruled illegal and result in a loss of down.

Penalty: Illegal Play - No Steps - Loss of Down

35. Safety: If during a scrimmage play, the ball becomes dead in the offensive team's own endzone (pulled flag, fumble, offensive player in possession of ball runs out-of-bounds through the back of the endzone, etc.), a safety shall be called. The team that was on defense will be awarded the ball on their own 7.5-yard line.
36. Declining a Penalty: During any play, if a distance penalty occurs by Team A on a successful play by Team B, then Team B shall have the option of declining the enforcement of the penalty and accepting the play instead.
37. Unsportsmanlike Conduct: At any point, if the referee(s) deem a player, coach, or fan's conduct is improper, excessive, threatening, or in any other manner offensive to the quality of the game, the referee(s) have power to penalize or eject such person. Likewise, Vineyard recreation coordinators have power to suspend such person. Please maintain a positive atmosphere, where all players, coaches, and fans can enjoy the game.

Penalty: Unsportsmanlike Conduct - 10 Steps from the end of the play and subject to ejection

38. Penalty Yardage: All minor penalties will result in a 5-step penalty either from the point of infraction or line of scrimmage. All major penalties will result in a 10-step penalty either from the point of infraction or line of scrimmage. Some penalties, like an illegal forward pass, illegal touching, and offensive pass interference will result in a loss of down. Some penalties, like flag guarding, will result in the play being blown down at the spot of the infraction. Severe penalties and unsportsmanlike conduct may be enforced as major penalties and subject to ejection. Severity of penalties will be determined by the game referee(s) with any minor penalty having the option to be upgraded to a major penalty. If penalty yardage advances the offense across the first-down line to gain, a new set of downs will be awarded to the offense.
39. Players and coaches are not allowed to add/switch any player(s) to any team without permission from Vineyard Recreation. Roster violations may result in suspensions and forfeiting games and/or wins. Coaches, please notify Vineyard Recreation if a player on your team decides to stop participating or misses several games.
- 40. Please be respectful to the referees, supervisors, players and coaches on both teams, other spectators, the fields, and any park staff. Any problems may result in the player, coach, and/or spectator being asked to leave the game. Serious or persistent problems may result in players, coaches, and/or spectators being suspended from further participation in Vineyard Recreation programs, including the current season.**

Coaches are responsible for making sure their teams (players and parents) know all the rules and conditions of playing in the league.

VOLUNTEER COACH EXPECTATIONS

As a **HEAD COACH**, you could receive up to a 50% refund on your child's registration by completing the following criteria:

- Pass pre-season coaches survey by **Thursday, August 13th, 2026** (10%)
- Attend & coach at 75% of the assigned team's games (10%)
- Organize & coach at 4 practices on non-game days for your assigned team (10%)
- Submit response to post-season survey by **Monday, October 5th, 2026** (10%)
- The other 10% is automatically received.

As an **ASSISTANT COACH**, you could receive up to a 25% refund on your child's registration by completing the following criteria:

- Pass pre-season coaches survey by **Thursday, August 13th, 2026** (5%)
- Attend & coach at 50% of the assigned team's games (5%)
- Organize & coach at 4 practices on non-game days for your assigned team (5%)
- Submit response to post-season survey by **Monday, October 5th, 2026** (5%)
- The other 5% is automatically received.

Coach Refunds are dependent upon returning equipment by Monday, October 5th, 2026

Tips for ensuring a successful season:

- Exemplify good sportsmanship.
- Communicate with your team parents frequently.
- Ask for help from your team parents and Vineyard Recreation if needed.
- Make it fun and enjoyable for every player! Please help each player have a positive experience in this league. **DON'T BE ANY KID'S LAST COACH.**
- Be positive and encouraging rather than negative and discouraging.
- Focus on the fundamentals: Throwing, Catching, Running, Flag Pulling, Defense, Offense - Resources can be provided by Vineyard Recreation if needed or desired.

*** If you cannot attend a game, please contact the assistant coach to fill in the head coaching role. If neither coach can attend, please contact Vineyard Recreation. ***