

# Youth Flag Football By-Laws 2019

3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Grades (Updated 8/20/2019)

**Field Dimensions:** Fields shall be 80 yards long (with 10 yard end zones) and 53 1/3 yards wide.

**Teams:** Teams will consist of 8-12 players. Seven (7) players will play on the field. The game may begin with a minimum five (5) players and be played until finish. Teams will play 8 regular season games and there is NO POST-SEASON TOURNAMENT.

**Formation:** All offensive players are eligible pass receivers. The ball must be clearly snapped to and in the sole possession of an offensive player other than the center. A legal snap can be between the legs or to the side, but must stay onside.

**Equipment:** Official game ball will be junior sized ball (TDJ or equivalent). Metal cleats or spikes are not permitted. Small rubber cleats are recommended. No bare feet or stocking feet will be allowed. Flag length will be designated and issued by the city. Belts and flags must be visible and worn at waist level on each side. No player may tamper or alter his/her flags in any way. Jerseys must be tucked in. **No pockets allowed in shorts.**

**Game Length:** The game will consist of two 20 minute halves with a running clock. The clock shall stop during the last minute of each half for penalties, incomplete passes, changes in ball possession, or play going out of bounds (exception – clock will continue to run if there is a 24 point difference in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half). Half-time will be 3 minutes in length. Each team will be allowed four (4) one minute time-outs than can be used at any time during the game (unless your team is ahead by 24 or more points). Players must stay on the playing field during time-outs.

**Putting Ball In Play:** The offensive team has 30 seconds to put the ball in play.

**Substitutions:** Substitutions shall be unlimited, but may occur on dead balls only.

**Scoring:** A touchdown is 6 points. The point after touchdown (PAT) will be attempted from the three yard line for one point or the ten yard line for two points. The offensive team will be required to notify the head official of their choice. *If the PAT is intercepted, the play is dead.*

Safety – two points will be awarded if the defensive team forces the ball to be downed behind the offensive team's goal line by fumbling or being downed.

**Kickoff:** There are no kickoffs for this league. The offensive team will start the game with the ball on their own 20 yard line. Offense/Defense to start the game will be determined by coin flip.

**First Down:** First downs – to keep possession of the ball, the offensive team must advance the ball past the next zone line in four (4) downs. As soon as the ball is advanced over the zone lines, the following down is a first down. A ball on the line is considered in the more forward zone.

**Neutral Zone:** The distance between the offensive and defensive lines at the beginning of a play shall be 3 yards if the ball is outside the defensive team's 20 yard line and 1 yard if the ball is inside the defensive team's 20 yard line.

**Diving, Spinning, Jumping:** Offensive players may not dive to advance the ball or score. Defensive players may not dive for offensive players flags. Spinning or jumping will result in an immediate dead ball.

**Stripping The Ball:** The defense cannot intentionally strip the ball from an offensive player.

**4th Down/Punting:** On 4<sup>th</sup> down the offensive team has 2 choices. 1. Go for the 1<sup>st</sup> down. 2. Freeze punt the ball to the other team. The 4<sup>th</sup> down decision must be announced to the official prior to beginning the play. The official shall then notify the other team so they may get into the appropriate formation. If a freeze punt is declared, it cannot be changed and no fake punt is allowed. Once the ball is snapped, only the punter on the kicking (offensive) team may move and shall punt the ball. Only the receiver on the receiving team may move. All other players on both teams shall remain still. Once the ball comes into contact with the receiving player (caught) or after striking the ground and rolling to a complete stop, the ball is declared dead. The receiving team cannot lose possession during a freeze punt.

**Forward Pass:** One forward pass can be made prior to crossing the line of scrimmage. All players on the field are eligible to receive or intercept passes. If a player has lost his/her flags and catches a pass, the ball will be downed where the ball is caught.

**Blocking:** All offensive players are eligible to receive a forward pass and only three (3) players can be in the backfield in addition to the quarterback. A player may block for his/her runner or passer by using a screen block. **No contact should take place.** If a blocker uses his/her arms, elbows, legs, lowers his/her shoulders or leaves his/her feet, it is an illegal block. Stiff-arming, spinning, and jumping are NOT allowed. A runner may not guard/block the flag in any manner. *Unintentional contact may occur – there is a difference between unintentional and illegal contact.*

**Dead Balls:** 1. A player is down once one of his/her knees or body contacts the ground – a hand on the ground to maintain balance is NOT down. 2. In removing the flag or stopping the ball, a defensive player should pull the flag and immediately set it on the ground. 3. If at any time the belt of the ball carrier falls off, the ball is down and the ball is dead. 4. All fumbles are dead the moment the ball contacts the ground. Possession of the ball remains with the team who had possession last. (*Exception – fumble on 4<sup>th</sup> down prior to making a 1<sup>st</sup> down; a fumble in the end zone is a safety.*) 5. If the ball is fumbled on the snap or on any play other than a punt, the ball is dead and the down is lost. If the ball is fumbled on a punt snap, the ball may be picked up and punted. 6. Inadvertent whistle – the ball is dead, play is over as soon as the whistle blows. 7. Dual possession on a pass – ball is dead and offense keeps the ball (no fighting for possession).

**Overtime:** Overtime will not be played. Games may end in a tie.

**Coaches:** One adult coach is allowed on the field for the duration of the season. All other coaches must stay on their respective sidelines during all games.

**Sportsmanship/Conduct:** No player, coach, or spectator shall act in an unsportsmanlike manner during the game, at halftime, or after the game. Examples are, but not limited to:

- a. Using profanity, insulting or vulgar language or gestures.
- b. Intentionally kicking at, swinging at, or pushing any player, spectator, coach or official.
- c. Harassing, insulting or badgering any official, coach, spectator, or player.

All cities participating in the Flag Football program are committed to providing a quality recreational sport program in a spirit of sportsmanship and fellowship for all of our families, friends and neighbors. It is expected that all players, coaches, parents and spectators will strongly adhere to all rules of play and etiquette involving the program.