



## 2021 YOUTH FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

### I. PLAYERS/TIME OF GAME

- A. Teams consist of 8-16 players. 6U will play 6 players per side. 8U & above will play 8 players per side. All players must play at least half of the game.
- B. All Teams must have a minimum of 5 players to begin a game. A 10-minute forfeit period will be allowed from the scheduled start of the game.
- C. 6U Games will consist of 4 eight-minute quarters with a running clock. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion. A 3-minute half-time will separate the first and second halves. Teams change sides of the field after halftime. When there are 2 minutes remaining in the half, the official will inform both coaches that there are 3 plays remaining in the half. Extra points will not count as a play.
- D. 8U & Above Games will consist of 4 ten-minute quarters with a running clock. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion. A 3-minute half-time will separate the first and second halves. Teams change sides of the field after halftime. When there are 2 minutes remaining in the half, the official will inform both coaches that there are 3 plays remaining in the half. Extra points will not count as a play.
- E. Each team is allowed 2 time-outs per half. Time-outs last 1 minute and do not carry over from the first to the second half.
- F. For 10U & above, if the score is tied at the end of the game, the game is over and declared a tie. League records and standings will be available [www.quickcores.com/ymcaokc](http://www.quickcores.com/ymcaokc)
- G. One coach may be present in the huddle on offense and should be at least ten (10) yards behind the line of scrimmage at the snap, & make every effort to avoid the movement of all players. One coach may be present in the huddle on defense and should be at least ten (10) yards in front of the line of scrimmage at the snap and make every effort to avoid the movement of all players.

### II. EQUIPMENT

- A. The YMCA requires that all participants wear a YMCA All Sport Jersey (Green and White). The YMCA will provide game balls, and flag belts for all games.
- B. Cleats are allowed, except for metal spikes. Cleats must be molded rubber and will be inspected by the officials.
- C. Mouthpieces are required.
- D. The sizes of the game balls are as follows:
- E. U 6 / U 8 – Pee Wee  
U 10 – Pee Wee  
U 12 – Junior

### III. GENERAL RULES OF PLAY

- A. The winner of the coin toss will choose offense, defense, or defer.
- B. The offensive team will start with the ball on their 20 Yard Line.



- C. An offensive team gets a first down by moving the ball into the next zone within 4 downs.
- D. Each time the ball is spotted a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive 1 warning before a delay of game penalty is enforced.
- E. Punts must be declared and the official will mark off 15 yards, or half the distance to the goal.
- F. Each team must use at least 2 quarterbacks per game and no quarterback may play more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the game.
- G. All players on the line of scrimmage must be within five yards off the ball laterally. If you wish to split a player out wider, they must be one of the backs and line up off the line of scrimmage.
- H. U6 - Maximum of two players in the backfield, including the quarterback.
- I. U8 & above - Maximum of three players in the backfield, including the quarterback.

#### **IV. RUNNING**

- A. The quarterback can run with the ball. Once the quarterback leaves the "pocket", all defensive players are eligible to pursue the ball carrier (Official's discretion). The pocket is defined as 5 yards (laterally), on each side of the ball.
- B. Direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted.
- C. Laterals or pitches of any kind are allowed. A dropped pitch or lateral will be a dead ball.
- D. No running zones are located 5-yards from each end zone and are designed to avoid short-yardage, power-running situations. Only forward passes beyond the line of scrimmage are allowed.
- E. The player who takes the handoff or backwards pitch can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- F. Once the ball has been handed off or pitched, all defensive players are eligible to rush the ball carrier.
- G. Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a defensive player or to gain additional yardage (no diving).
- H. The player will be considered down when/where the player leaves his feet.
- I. It is the responsibility of the ball carrier to avoid contact.
- J. The ball is spotted where the ball carriers feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.
- K. The ball carrier may not protect his flag or swipe at the arms of a tackler. This will result in the ball carrier being declared down at the spot of the infraction.

#### **V. RECEIVING**

- A. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
- B. Only 1 player is allowed in motion at a time.
- C. A player must have at least 1 foot inbounds when making a reception.

#### **VI. PASSING**

- A. Shovel passes are allowed. If a fumble occurs, the ball is dead and a loss of down occurs.
- B. Interceptions can be returned.
- C. Once the quarterback leaves the "pocket", all defensive players are eligible to pursue the quarterback (Official's discretion).

### **VII. Defensive Rushing**

- A. Two beanbags will be dropped prior to each play. The first is a marker bag, which will allow dropped passes to quickly move back to the original line of scrimmage. The second bag will be dropped three paces in front of the line of scrimmage on the defensive side of the ball. Anyone wishing to rush the quarterback must start from an area behind this beanbag and be identified with a wristband.
- B. Rushing the quarterback is allowed.
- C. U6 & U8 teams may rush the quarterback with one player.
- D. U 10 & Above teams may rush the quarterback with two players.

### **VIII. BLOCKING**

- A. Blockers must keep their hands in at their chest or belt with their elbows down. There is no blocking down field.
- B. Blocking is allowed on Kick-Offs; however, it must be a screen block using the same technique as at the line of scrimmage.
- C. It is the responsibility of the rusher to avoid contact with the blocker.

### **IX. DEAD BALLS**

- A. The ball must be snapped between the legs, not off to one side, to start play.
- B. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
- C. Play is ruled dead in the following situations:
  - 1. Ball carrier flag is pulled
  - 2. Ball carrier steps out of bounds
  - 3. Touchdown or safety is scored
  - 4. Ball carrier knee hits the ground
  - 5. Ball carrier flag falls out
  - 6. Dropped lateral or pitch
  - 7. Fumble
  - 8. If the ball is dropped while attempting a direct snap, under center, the play will be blown dead.
  - 9. If the ball is dropped while attempting a shotgun snap, the play will not be blown dead and may be played. However, if the referee judges that there is danger of a collision between the players going for the loose ball it will be blown dead and placed at the spot where the ball was dropped.

### **X. SCORING**

- A. Touchdown: 6 points
- B. Extra Points: 1 point (from 5-yard line), 2 points (from 12-yard line)
- C. Safety: 2 points

## **XI. PENALTIES**

A. All penalties will be enforced by the referee.

B. Defensive penalties:

1. Encroachment or if rushing player(s) are not identified with wristbands: 5 yards and repeat the down;
2. Pass Interference: 5 yards and automatic first down;
3. Illegal Contact (holding, blocking, etc.): 5 yards, automatic first down;
4. Illegal Flag Pull (before player has ball): 5 yards, automatic first down.  
Tackling: 15 yards, automatic first down.
5. Tackling is not allowed. This is a non-contact league designed to develop players' individual skills and build teamwork through structured athletic activity. Incidental contact resulting in the ball carrier going down will not be called, at the discretion of the official.
6. Offensive penalties:
  - a. Illegal Motion (more than 1 person moving, false start): 5 yards, repeat the down;
  - b. Offensive Pass Interference: 5 yards, repeat the down;
  - c. Stiff Arming: 5 yards (from line of scrimmage), loss of down;
  - d. Delay of Game: clock stops, 5 yards, repeat the down;
  - e. Illegal Blocking: 5 yard penalty, repeat the down
  - f. Rough play will not be tolerated. The player will receive one warning and will be removed from the game (Official's Discretion).
  - g. Unsportsmanlike Conduct will be penalized 15 yards, loss of down.

## **XII. YMCA MISSION STATEMENT**

To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.