



## YMCA of Central Stark County Flag Football League Rules

### 1. **GAME**

- At the start of each game, captains from both teams meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who starts with the ball. The visiting team calls the toss.
- The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense. The loser of the coin toss has the choice of direction. Possession changes to start the second half to the team that started the game on defense.
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four (4) plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has four (4) plays to score a touchdown.
- If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts its drive on its own 5-yard line.
- If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its own 5-yard line.
- All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yard line.
- Teams change sides after the first half.
- They will play in a 5v5 format (Spring) and 6v6 (Fall).

### 2. **EQUIPMENT**

- The league will provide each player with a flag belt that will be worn during the game then left at the field.
- Cleats are allowed (No metal cleats can be worn).
- Players must remove all jewelry.
- Players' jerseys must be tucked into shorts or pants if they hang below the belt line.
- Mouth Guards must be worn at all times while on the field of play.
- Players' jerseys must be tucked into shorts or pants if they hang below the belt line.

### 3. **FIELD**

- The field dimensions are 30 yards by 60 yards with two 5-yard end zones.
- Stepping on the boundary line is considered out of bounds.
- Their will be a no run zone in place to prevent teams from conducting power run plays close to the endzone. While in the no run zones (a five-yard imaginary line before the endzone) teams cannot run the ball in any fashion 3rd and 4th grade. For Kinder-2nd you must run a play outside the tacklebox.

### 4. **TIMING & OVERTIME**

- Each game will consist of (2) 20-minute halves, with (1) 2-minute halftime.
- Each team is allowed (2) 60 second timeouts per half. Timeouts do not carry over into the second half.
- The clock will be continuous, except for timeouts, injuries, or a change of possession.
- When on offense, teams will have a maximum of 40 seconds to begin the play. If the offense fails to get off a play in the allotted 40 seconds, the first occurrence will result in a "warning." The second occurrence and each thereafter will result in a loss of down. Coaches



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are encouraged to be organized and timely with their play calls and instruction between plays.

- If the score is tied after 40 minutes of play, an overtime period will be used to determine a winner. The format is as follows:
  - a. A coin Flip to determine the team that will choose offense or defense.
    - 1. If a second round of overtime must be played, the team that lost the coin flip will choose offense or defense for the start of the second round of overtime.
  - b. The referee will determine which side of the field overtime takes place on.
  - c. Each team will get one chance to score from the 10yd line. You will then get a chance to go for your extra point.
    - 1. After the second round of overtime both teams must go for two.
  - d. There are no timeouts.

### **5. SCORING**

- TOUCHDOWN 6 Points.
- PAT 1 point (5yd line) or 2 points (10yd line)
  - a. 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. Interceptions on conversions cannot be returned.
- Safety (No points)
  - a. Ball will be spotted on the goal line and play will continue as normal.

### **6. LIVE & DEAD BALL**

- The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.
- A player who gains possession in the air is considered inbounds as long as one foot comes down in the field of play.
- 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.
- Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
- Any official can whistle the play dead.
- Play is ruled "dead" when:
  - a. The ball hits the ground.
  - b. The ball-carrier's flag is pulled.
  - c. The ball-carrier steps out of bounds.
  - d. A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored.
  - e. The ball-carrier's knee or arm hits the ground.
  - f. The ball-carriers flag falls off.
  - g. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of no flag(s).
  - h. Inadvertent whistle.
    - 1. If the ball isn't advanced to the line of scrimmage via the pass or run within 7 seconds.



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**NOTE:** There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball-carrier's feet were at the time of the fumble.

- In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has two options:
  - a. Take the ball where it was when the whistle blew, and the down is consumed.
  - b. Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.

### **7. RUNNING**

- The ball is spotted where the ball is when the flag is pulled.
- Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Handoffs may be in front, behind or to the side of the offensive player but must be behind the line of scrimmage. The offense may use multiple handoffs.
  - a. "Center sneak" play is **not** allowed.
  - b. Pitches are allowed.
- Any player who receives a handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball has been handed off in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding.
- Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a flag pull. (Players spinning out of control will be called for flag guarding.)
- Runners may leave their feet if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid collision with another player without a flag guarding penalty enforced.
- Flag obstruction – All jerseys **MUST** be tucked in before play begins. Flags must not be knotted in anyway.
- A player is not allowed to stiff arm it will be considered flag guarding.

### **8. PASSING**

- All passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward and received beyond the line scrimmage.
  - a. All passes that do not cross the line of scrimmage, whether received or not, are illegal forward passes.
  - b. The quarterback may throw the ball away to avoid a sack. Pass must go beyond the line of scrimmage.
- Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.

### **9. RECEIVING**

- All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
- Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. All motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted toward the line of scrimmage.
- A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.
- Interceptions may be returned, and the ball will be spotted according to the flag pulling rules.
  - a. Interceptions are returnable but not on conversions after touchdowns.
- In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.



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### 10. RUSHING THE PASSER

- NO rushing the passer.
- There will be a 7 second time limit for the QB to either attempt a pass or cross the line of scrimmage. If the QB fails to do so it will result in the play being blown dead. The ball will be spotted back at the line of scrimmage.
- **A penalty will be called if:**
  - a. Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped –offsides (5 yards from line of scrimmage and first down).
  - b. NO contact can be made with the quarterback in any way. Blocking the pass or attempting to block the pass and then making contact with the passer will result in a roughing the passer penalty.
  - c. Bull Rushing is to be avoided. If a player bull rushes, they will receive a unnecessary roughness penalty.
    1. To avoid bull rushing, the defensive rusher must change direction upon approaching the line of scrimmage in an effort to avoid becoming engaged with a blocker.

### 11. FLAG PULLING

- A legal flag pull takes place when the ball-carrier is in full possession of the ball.
- Defenders can dive to pull flags but cannot tackle, hold or run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.
- It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball-carrier's possession at any time.
- If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during the play, the player is down immediately upon possession of the ball and the play ends. The ball is placed where the flag lands.
- A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball.
- 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, arm or shoulder or intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey.

### 12. FORMATIONS

- Offenses must have a minimum of 3 players on the line of scrimmage.
  - a. One player at a time may go in motion and must run parallel to the line of scrimmage.
  - b. No Motion toward the line of scrimmage.
- Movement by a player who is set or a player who runs toward the line of scrimmage while in motion is considered a false start.
- The center must snap the ball in a continuous motion starting with the ball on the ground either between the legs or sideways hand off.
  - a. You may line up in a shotgun and toss the ball back if the snap is dropped the play will be called dead and the ball spotted back at the line of scrimmage.
  - b. Defenses can line up 3 yards from the offensive line of scrimmage. They cannot leave that line until the ball has been handed off or the quarterback attempts to run.



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- Defenses can line up 3 yards from the offensive line of scrimmage. They can't leave that line until the ball carrier is in the vicinity of the line of scrimmage.

### **13. SPORTSMANSHIP**

- If the referee sees any intentional tackling, elbowing cheap shots or any unsportsmanlike act they will stop play and enforce an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty. The player committing the act will be subbed out to discuss the illegal act with the coaching staff.
- Unsportsmanlike conduct by any coach or player will result in an automatic ejection from game AND playing field. The ejected individual may face further suspension. This will be up to the discretion of the YMCA Sports Director. FOUL LANGUAGE WILL NOT BE TOLERATED. This same rule applies to all spectators.
- Fans must show good sportsmanship as well. They are encouraged to cheer for your players and not harass officials of the other teams, coaches, or referees. Fans will also be encouraged to cheer for all players and teams.
- Unsportsmanlike conduct penalty:
  - a. Defense 10yds from the line of scrimmage and automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down
  - b. Offense 10yds and loss of down

### **14. COACHING EXPECTATIONS**

- Coaches will be required to lead using a "YMCA Philosophy," while at all times modeling and teaching the YMCA Six Pillars of Character (Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring and Citizenship).
- All players must play at least the equivalent of one half playing both offense and defense and have the opportunity to attempt to carry the football.
- The YMCA will supply each team with flag and footballs for the practice they should be returned to the shed after each practice.
- Each coach should facilitate (2) 1 hour practice for 3-4 grades. It will be the responsibility of each head coach to prepare and have ideas in mind for practices with the participants. Please ask the YMCA Sports Director for drills/ideas, as needed.
- In event of inclement weather and/or cancellations, the YMCA Sports Director will contact coaches as soon as a decision is made. It will be the responsibility of each coach to contact the parents of the participants on their team.
- Coaches are encouraged to position and instruct players on the field during the games. No more than **TWO COACHES** are allowed on the field at any given time. All other coaches should do their best to always remain on the sidelines. This will help with substitutions and the attention of the participants during the game. NO more than 4 coaches may be on the sidelines during the games.
- ALL COACHES MUST complete all proper background and training to be eligible to coach.

### **15. PENALTIES**

- All penalties will be called by referee.
- Referees will determine incidental contact that may result from a normal run play.
- All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage unless otherwise stated.
- Only the head coach may address the referee about questions about the rules.



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- Referees will be encouraged to explain why they called the penalty on a certain play to encourage them to grow as a player.
- All penalties will be 5 yards unless otherwise stated.
  - a. Offside
  - b. Holding
  - c. Illegal Motion
  - d. Illegal forward pass
  - e. Roughing the passer
  - f. Taunting (will be given a warning for first offense)
  - g. Offensive / Defensive pass interference
  - h. Delay of Game
  - i. Flag Guarding or Stiff Arming (Ball awarded at the spot of infraction)
  - j. Unnecessary Roughness
  - k. Unsportsmanlike conduct penalty:
    - l. Defense 10yds from the line of scrimmage and automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down
    - m. Offense 10yds and loss of down

\*\*Rules may change by sports director to suit the needs of the league. Coaches will be made aware of any changes.