

YOUTH FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

PLAYING THE GAME

- A coin toss determines first possession.
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has three (3) plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three (3) plays to score a touchdown. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on its 5-yard line.
- If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its 5-yard line.
- All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yard line.
- Teams change sides after the first 20 minutes, but possession does not change and the clock does not stop.
- If the defensive team scores a safety, they will take possession of the ball at mid-field.

PLAYERS/GAME SCHEDULES

- Teams must field a minimum of 7 players at all times. The offense must have 3 linemen and the defense must have 2 linemen.
- Teams consist of 14 players (7 on the field with 7 substitutes).
- All players must play at least half of each game.

TIMING/OVERTIME

- Games are played to 40 minutes running time. There will be four 10-minute quarters, with a 3-minute half time and 1 minute between quarters. Play will be with a running clock.
- During the last two (2) minutes of each half, the clock will stop on every dead ball.
- Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
- If the score is tied at the end of 40 minutes, teams move directly into overtime. The first team to score wins. Score will not be kept for 1st & 2nd Grade Division.
- Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.
- Each team has one 60-second and one 30-second time out per half. Timeouts cannot be carried over to the second half. Use them or lose them.

SCORING

The YMCA emphasizes fun and skills. Score will not be kept for 1st & 2nd Grade Division.

Touchdown:	6 points
Extra point:	1 point (played from 5-yard line) or 2 points (played from 12-yard line)
Safety:	2 points

RUNNING

- The quarterback cannot run with the ball.
- Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Offense may use multiple handoffs.
- Absolutely NO laterals or pitches of any kind.
- "No-running zones," located 5 yards from each end zone and 5 yards on either side of midfield, are designed to avoid short-yardage, power-running situations.



SPORTS

- The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball has been handed off, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a defensive player (no diving).
- The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.

RECEIVING

- All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
- As in the NFL, only one player is allowed in motion at a time.
- A player must have at least one foot inbound when making a reception.

PASSING

- All passes must be forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage.
- Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
- The quarterback has a seven-second "pass clock." If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, play is dead, loss of down. Once the ball is handed off, the seven-second rule no longer is in effect.
- Interceptions change the possession of the ball at the point of interception. Interceptions are the only changes of possession that do not start on the 5-yard line.

DEAD BALLS

- The ball must be snapped between the legs, not off to one side, to start play.
- Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
- Play is ruled "dead" when:
 - Ball carrier's flag is pulled.
 - Ball carrier steps out of bounds.
 - Touchdown or safety is scored.
 - At the point of an interception (interception returns are not allowed).
 - Ball carrier's knee hits the ground.
 - Ball carrier's flag falls out.

Note: There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground.

RUSHING THE QUARTERBACK

- All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball is handed off, the seven-yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage. A special marker, or the referee, will designate seven yards from the line of scrimmage. Remember, no blocking or tackling is allowed.

SPORTSMANSHIP/ROUGHING

- If the field monitor or referee witnesses any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking, or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game. FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.



SPORTS

- Trash talking is illegal. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. (Trash talk is talk that may be offensive to officials, opposing players, teams, or spectators.) If trash talking occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.

Note: Please remember that this is a YMCA league and that we are here to have fun and for the kids to enjoy the program. Thank you.

PENALTIES

- The referee will call all penalties.
- Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage.
- Only the team captain may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations.
- Players cannot question judgment calls.
- Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.

Defense:

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| 1. Offsides | 5 yards and automatic first down |
| 2. Interference
down | 10 yards and automatic first |
| 3. Illegal contact
down
<i>(holding, blocking, pushing, etc.)</i> | 10 yards and automatic first |
| 4. Illegal flag pull
down
<i>(before receiver has ball)</i> | 10 yards and automatic first |
| 5. Illegal rushing
down
<i>(starting rush from inside 7-yard marker)</i> | 10 yards and automatic first |
| 6. Roughing the Passer
down
<i>(any unnecessary physical contact with the passer)</i> | 15 yards and automatic first |
| 7. Delay of game | Clock stops, 10 yards and loss of down |

Offense:

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| 1. Illegal motion
<i>(more than one person moving, false start, etc.)</i> | 5 yards and loss of down |
| 2. Illegal forward pass
<i>(pass received behind line of scrimmage)</i> | 5 yards and loss of down |
| 3. Offensive pass interference
<i>(illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender)</i> | 10 yards and loss of down |
| 4. Flag guarding | 10 yards (from line of scrimmage) and loss of down |
| 5. Delay of game | Clock stops, 10 yards and loss of down (BFC - 5 yards) |
| 6. Clipping
<i>(block into the back of the opponent)</i> | 15 yards and loss of down |
| 7. Intentional Grounding | 5 yards and loss of down |



SPORTS

- (throwing the ball to avoid a sack)*
8. Straight Arm 5 yards
(extended to ward off an opponent)
9. Lowering Head 5 yards

(ball carrier may not run over a defensive player)

EQUIPMENT & ATTIRE

- Tennis shoes or rubber cleats are allowed. Metal cleats are not permitted. Pre-game inspections must be made.
- All players must wear a protective mouthpiece; there are no exceptions.
- No obstructing clothing may be worn that might harm members of the other team or cover the flags.
- Players must wear the uniform and flags provided by the YMCA during play, no personalized jerseys will be accepted.
- All players must wear a set of flags. A tackle is made by removing a flag and holding it aloft.