



## Youth Flag Football Rules

### Playing The Game:

- A coin toss determines the first possession.
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at the 40-yard line (U8) and its 5-yard line (U11, U14) and has four (4) plays to achieve a new set of downs (first down) or score a touchdown.
- To achieve a first down the offense must cross the 20-yard line (U8) and midfield (U11, U14).
- Once a team crosses midfield, it has four (4) plays to score a touchdown.
- If the offense fails to achieve a first down, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on the 40-yard line (U8) and its 5-yard line (U11, U14).
- If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on the 40-yard line (U8) and its 5-yard line (U11, U14).
- All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offensive 40-yard line (U8) and 5-yard line (U11, U14).
- If the defensive team scores a safety, they will receive 2 points and take possession of the ball at their 5-yard line (U14 only).

### Alignment:

- Defense- U8 has to be lined up 5 yards off the ball. U11 and U14 can line up anywhere as long as they are not off sides.
- Offense- All divisions must have a minimum of 4 players on the line of scrimmage.

### Players/Game Schedules:

- Teams must field 7 players at all times, unless the coaches agree on less. Both teams must have equal number of players on the field during play.
- Each player will need to play a minimum of 2 quarters or 50% of game time.
- Teams will play 5 regular season games followed by a single elimination tournament. U8 will not play a tournament, but will play 6 regular season games.

**Timing/Overtime:**

- U14 will play 4-10 minute quarters (5-minute halftime). U8 and U11 will play 2-20 minute halves (5-minute halftime).
- Officials can stop the clock at their discretion. There will be a running clock except for change of possession.
- No overtime in the regular season.
- In the playoffs, the team that wins the coin toss will get to choose to go for 1 point (5-yard line) or 2 points (12-yard line). If team chooses 2 points and converts, the second team must convert a 2-point conversion (12-yard line) to continue the game. However, if they choose to go for 1 point the other team can win if they convert a 2-point play (and vice-versa). If they don't convert, the team that went for 1 (5-yard line) and converted is declared the winner. After the 3<sup>rd</sup> OT, every team will be required to go for 2 points.
- Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive ONE (1) warning before a delay of game penalty is called.
- The clock only stops on timeouts... 1 timeout per half... No timeouts in U8.

**Scoring:**

- Score will not be kept for U8.
- Touchdowns = 6 points.
- Extra point = Automatic 1 point, team can elect to go for 2 points (12-yard line). If two point attempt fails, team will remain at 6 points.
- Safety 2 points:
  - Safeties are NOT allowed in U8 and U11. Instead, loss of down occurs and ball will be replaced at the line of scrimmage.
  - If the defensive team scores a safety, they will receive 2 points and take possession of the ball at their 5-yard line (U14 only).

**Runs (Handoffs, Pitches & Tosses):**

- U8: 3 handoffs allowed per set of downs.
- U11: 1 handoff allowed per set of downs.
- U14: NO handoffs allowed, ONLY passing.

**Laterals:**

- Backwards pitch or handoff beyond the line of scrimmage. A fumble behind the line of scrimmage is live (U8 only). A fumble beyond the line of scrimmage is a dead ball.

**Receiving:**

- All players can receive passes (Including the QB if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
- Only one player in motion at a time
- A player must have one foot inbound when making a reception

**Passing:**

- All completed passes must be forward; backwards passes cannot be advanced beyond the line of scrimmage.
- The QB has a seven-second “pass clock” if the ball is not passed, the play is dead and loss of down.
- All leagues will use a quarterback (QB) stand.
- Interceptions:
  - Interceptions will result in the change of possession and the defense will take possession at the 20-yard line (U8 only).
  - Interceptions in the U11/U14 leagues are returnable (including extra points – worth 2 points U11/U14 only).

**Blocking:**

- Shield blocking only for all leagues.

**Dead Balls:**

- Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
- Play is ruled “dead” when:
  - Ball carrier flag is pulled.
  - Ball carrier steps out of bounds.
  - Touchdown or safety is scored.
  - Interceptions (U8).
  - Fumbles beyond the line of scrimmage.
  - Ball carrier knee hits the ground.
  - Ball carrier flag falls out.
  - If flag falls (regardless of fault) its considered down.

**Rushing the QB:**

- There are no QB blitzes or QB runs in any division.

**Sportsmanship/Roughing:**

- If the League Supervisor or referee witness any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking, or any unsportsmanlike conduct, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game. **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.**
- Offensive language/trash talk from players or coaches to other opposing players and coaches, officials, or spectators will not be tolerated.

**Penalties:**

- The referee will call all penalties.
- Only the coach may ask the referee about the rule clarification.

- Games cannot end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.

**Defensive Penalties:**

1. **Offside** = 5 yards, replay down.
2. **Interference** = 10 yards and automatic first down.
3. **Illegal contact** = 10 yards and automatic first down (holding, blocking, pushing, etc.).
4. **Illegal flag pull** = 10 yards and automatic first down (before receiver has ball).
5. **Delay of game** = 5 yards, replay down.

**Offense:**

1. **Illegal motion** = 5 yards, replay down.
2. **Illegal forward pass** = 5 yards, replay down (a pass thrown in front of line of scrimmage).
3. **Offensive pass interference** = 10 yards, replay down (illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender).
4. **Flag guarding** = 5 yards, replay down.
5. **Delay of game** = 5 yards, replay down.
6. **Clipping** = 15 yards, replay down (block into the back of the opponent).
7. **Straight Arm** = 5 yards, replay down (extended to ward off an opponent).
8. **Lowering Head** = 5 yards, replay down (ball carrier may not run over a defensive player).

**Equipment:**

- No** metal cleats allowed.
- Mouthpieces required.
- Players must wear uniforms provided by the Columbus Parks Department during game play.
- All players must wear a set of flags (provided by the parks department).
- Football will be provided by the parks departments.