



YOUTH 7-on-7 FLAG FOOTBALL RULES AND REGULATIONS

RULE 1: THE GAME

1. A coin flip will take place prior to the game. Winner of the toss will choose to receive, defend, or defer their choice to the second half. Loser of the toss makes the remaining decision.
2. There will be a maximum of a five (5) minute rest period between halves.
3. To begin a half or after a score, the ball will be placed on the offensive team's own 10 yard line.
4. **Field Dimensions**
 - a. **6 & 7 Age Division:** 40 yards x 60 yards
 - i. Four 10 yard increments with two 10 yard end zones.
 - b. **8 & 9, 10 & 11, and 12 & 13 Age Divisions:** 40 yards x 100 yards
 - i. Four 20 yards increments with two 10 yards end zones.
5. A team in possession of the ball shall have four consecutive downs to advance to the next first down line. Any down may be repeated if provided for by rule.
6. The ball carrier is declared down and the ball is set at the location of the feet of the ball carrier at the time the clip on the belt is detached.

RULE 2: PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTES

1. Seven (7) players constitute a full team on the field.
2. At least one (1) and up to six (6) offensive players must be on the line of scrimmage at the snap of the ball. The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.
3. There is no limit to number of substitutes made. Each substitute must play at least one (1) play upon entering the game.
4. It is expected that all players play at least 50% of the game. It is encouraged that players be exposed to as many different positions as possible throughout the course of the season.

RULE 3: UNIFORMS, EQUIPMENT, and FLAGS

1. Mouthpieces are MANDATORY for EVERY player.
2. Shoes shall be tennis/basketball shoes or rubber-cleats, which has cleats or ripples, which are an integral part of the shoe's construction.
 - a. Including detachable cleats or spikes.
 - b. No hard-soled street shoes may be worn.
 - c. Any shoe which has metal or steel tips is prohibited.
3. No bare feet shall be allowed.
4. No jewelry or accessories (such as rubber bracelets) may be worn by players.
5. No players shall wear helmets, padded uniforms, or any hard/unyielding substance.
 - a. A player may not participate while wearing a cast.
 - b. Exception: A metal knee brace, which must have a protective covering over it.
6. Each player on the field must wear a belt at his waistline with three (3) flags attached, one (1) on each side and one (1) on the back (provided by City of Peoria).
7. Shirts must be tucked in at all times.
 - a. If any part of the shirt covers the flag belt, and hinders the opponent, it will constitute Illegal Procedure.

RULE 4: BALL

1. The size of the ball will be:
 - a. 6 & 7 Division.....Pee Wee
 - b. 8 & 9, 10 & 11 Division.....Junior
 - c. 12 & 13 Division.....Youth / Intermediate

RULE 5: TIME and TIME-OUTS

1. Each half will be played with a 20 minute running clock.
 - a. Running clock only stops on time-outs or injury.
 - b. Clock will run during extra point attempts.
2. The clock will stop in the last two (2) minutes of the game on an incomplete pass, when the ball carrier steps out of bounds, OR on a change of possession.
 - a. Exception: If one team is ahead by twelve (12) points or more, the clock will not stop.
3. There shall be a time limit of twenty five (25) seconds between plays, from the time the ball is declared live by the referee until the ball is snapped on the next play.
4. Each team will have two (2) time-outs per game, lasting 30 seconds per time out.

RULE 6: SCORING AND SCORING PLAYS

1. Touchdown - 6 points.
2. Point(s) after touchdown: A team scoring a touchdown has its choice of attempting a P.A.T for:
 - a. A one point conversion is from the 3 yard line.
 - b. A two point conversion is from the 10 yard line.
 - i. Any conversion try that is intercepted may be returned by the defense for two points.
3. Safety - 2 points.



- a. After a safety, the team scoring the safety shall put the ball in play on their own 10 yard line.

RULE 7: SPORTSMANSHIP RULES

1. If a team is winning by eighteen (18) points or more, all offensive plays must be pass plays.

RULE 8: LIVE BALL, DEAD BALL, and OUT OF BOUNDS

1. A dead ball becomes live as a result of a legal snap from scrimmage.
2. A live ball becomes dead as a result of the following acts:
 - a. When the ball makes contact with the ground or anything out of bounds.
 - b. When any part of the ball carrier's body, other than his / her hands or feet touches the ground.
 - c. Removal of the ball carrier's flag belt.
 - d. When the 7 second quarterback
 - e. When a touchdown, touchback, safety, fair catch or try for point is made.
 - f. When the ball touches the ground.
 - g. When a forward pass is caught simultaneously by opponents.

RULE 9: SNAPPING the BALL, NEUTRAL ZONE, and LINE of SCRIMMAGE

1. The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between his/her legs to a player in the back field. The ball must completely leave his/her hands.
 - a. In the **6&7 division** centers may snap the ball from the side of their body.
2. The player receiving the snap will be considered the quarterback.
3. Prior to the snap, the center must have both feet behind the line of scrimmage and no part of his body shall be beyond the forward point of the ball.
4. No player may make contact or interfere with an opponent or the ball before it is snapped.
5. No player of either team shall encroach upon the neutral zone after it has been established.
 - a. Penalty: Encroachment OR Offside, 5 yards.
6. No players shall interlock their legs.
7. No player shall make a false movement to cause opponents to be offside / encroach.
 - a. Penalty: False Start, 5 yards.
8. When the ball is snapped, only one offensive player may be in motion.
 - a. Motion must be backwards or parallel to line of scrimmage.
9. All players must line up within 15 yards of the ball.
 - a. Penalty: Illegal Formation, 5 yards.
10. All offensive players must be set for a full second before the ball is snapped.
 - a. Exception: One player may be in motion.

RULE 10: FUMBLES

1. Any ball that is fumbled and touches the ground shall be dead immediately and shall belong to the team last in possession.
2. A player may not attempt to strip the ball from the ball carrier.
 - a. Penalty: Illegal contact, 10 yards from the end of the run.

RULE 11: BLOCKING

1. No blocking or screening is allowed at anytime.
2. All offensive players must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. No running with the ball carrier shall be allowed.
3. **Illegal Contact** – at or beyond the line of scrimmage – In cases where the person(s) acting as the offensive lineman initiates any contact (at the referees discretion), it will be ruled a 10 yard penalty from the line of scrimmage and we will replay the down. If this contact is deemed excessive by the referee, an "unnecessary roughness" penalty of 10 yards can be assessed in addition to the "illegal contact." This would make the total penalty 20 yards.
4. Defensive players hold equal responsibility to avoid contact. Ramming or Tackling an opponent will be a 10 yard penalty.

RULE 12: DEFENSIVE RUSH

1. All players who rush the passer must be a minimum 7 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.
2. Once the quarterback releases the ball, the 7 yard rush rule is no longer in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
3. A special marker, or the referee, will designate a Rush Line 7 yards from the line of scrimmage. Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.
4. A legal rush is:
 - a. Any rush from a point 7 yards from the defensive line of scrimmage.
 - b. A rush from anywhere on the field **AFTER** the ball has been handed off by the quarterback.



- c. If a rusher leaves the rush line early and the quarterback releases the ball before they cross the line of scrimmage, they may legally rush the ball carrier.
5. A penalty may be called if:
 - a. The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff or pass – Illegal Rush .
 - b. Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped – Offside
 - c. Any defensive player, not lined up at the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed or handed off – Illegal Rush
6. Special circumstances:
 - a. Teams are not required to rush the quarterback, a seven second clock will be in effect.
 - b. Teams are not required to identify their rusher before they play, however, if they do send a rusher, the rusher must verify with the official that they are in the correct position.
 - c. If rusher leaves the Rush Line before the snap, he/she may immediately drop back to act as defender with no offside penalty enforced.
 - d. Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however, 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.
7. The offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has the right to a clear path to the quarterback, regardless of where they line up prior to the snap. If the “path or line” is occupied by a moving offensive player, then it is the offense’s responsibility to avoid the rusher. Any disruption to the rusher’s path and/or contact will result in an Impeding the Rusher penalty. If the offensive player does not move after the snap, then it is the rusher’s responsibility to go around the offensive player and to avoid contact.
8. A sack occurs if the quarterback’s flag belt pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball is placed where the quarterback’s feet are when flag is pulled.
9. A Safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team’s end zone.

RULE 13: RUNNING THE BALL

1. A ball carrier may hand off, pitch or pass backwards at any time.
2. A backward pass may be intercepted by an opponent before it hits the ground and may be advanced.
3. When a backward pass or fumble hits the ground between the goal lines it becomes dead and belongs to the team last in possession of the ball at the spot where the ball hit the ground.
4. If a backward pass or fumble hits the ground in the end zone, it shall be ruled a safety.
5. An attempt to avoid a stationary opponent by jumping or diving over/into them shall be a violation.
 - a. Penalty: Illegal Contact, 10 yards from the spot of the foul.
6. A player may jump over a fallen opponent.
7. The quarterback may not rush the ball passed the line of scrimmage.

RULE 14: PASSING

1. The offensive team is allowed one forward pass from anywhere behind the line of scrimmage.
 - a. There can be no forward pass made beyond the line of scrimmage.
2. The quarterback has a 7second “pass clock.” If a pass is not thrown within the 7 seconds, the play is dead, the down is consumed, and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage. Once the quarterback releases the ball, the 7 second rule no longer is in effect.
3. The quarterback may not run the ball passed the line scrimmage. The quarterback does have the ability to scramble in the backfield but cannot directly advance the ball beyond the LOS. The quarterback is the player who receives the snap.
4. A receiver must have one foot inbounds to make a completed pass.
5. When a legal forward pass touches the ground or anything out of bounds, it becomes dead and is ruled as an incomplete pass.
6. An eligible receiver who leaves the field of play (steps out of bounds) loses his / her eligibility, but may regain it again after he returns to the field of play, and after the ball has been touched by any other player.
 - a. Penalty – Illegal Touching, 5 yards.
7. If a legal forward pass is caught simultaneously by eligible receivers of opposing teams, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the team which put the ball in play, unless such play was a fourth down, and line-to-gain has not been reached.
8. During a down in which a legal forward pass is thrown, contact which interferes with an eligible receiver who is beyond the neutral zone will result in:
 - a. Defensive Pass Interference, 10 yards, Automatic First Down
 - b. Offensive Pass Interference, 10 yards, Loss of Down
9. All players of both teams are eligible pass receivers, including the quarterback after handoff behind the line of scrimmage.
 - i. The Quarterback cannot catch his / her own pass without the ball first touching another player.
10. The lines marking the sidelines and the back of the end zones shall be considered out-of-bounds.
11. A player that intentionally throws the ball out of bounds to avoid having his / her flag pulled will be penalized for Intentional Grounding.
 - a. Exception, there will be no penalty if the player throwing the ball is within five yards of the sideline.

RULE 15: FLAGGING

1. A down shall be ended and the ball declared dead when the ball carrier’s belt is removed.
 - a. The defensive player should immediately hold the flag above his / her head where the capture occurred.
2. Anytime a ball carrier inadvertently loses his / her belt, the play will be called dead and the spot of the ball will be where the belt came off the ball carrier.
3. Flag pulling of a player who does not have the ball is considered Illegal Procedure.
 - a. Penalty – 10 yards, automatic first down.
4. Flag Guarding
 - a. A ball carrier shall not interfere with the defensive team’s effort to pull their flags.



- i. The ball carrier is allowed to spin when running.
 - ii. No stiff arms or knocking the hands of the defender away from your flags.
 - iii. The ball carrier must keep his hands and arms above the flag to avoid penalty.
 - b. Penalty – 10 yards from the spot of the foul.
- 5. Defensive Obstruction
 - a. If, in attempting to take the flag, the defensive player obstructs the ball carrier without pulling his/her flags, defensive obstruction will be called.
 - i. Includes UNINTENTIONAL holding, tripping, “knee blocking”, etc.
 - b. Penalty – 10 yards from the end of the run.

RULE 16: PUNTING

- 1. **6 & 7 Division:** There will be No Punting.
 - a. Team’s will be given four downs to either secure a first down (and another set of our four downs), or a touchdown.
 - b. If a team is unable to secure a first down or a touchdown, the opposing team will automatically take over possession on their own 10 yard line.
- 2. **8 & 9, 10 & 11, and 12 & 13 Division:** When the offensive team wishes to punt (regardless of down), it is required to declare to the officials its intention to kick while they are still in their huddle.
 - a. The decision can only be changed after a penalty or charged time out.

PUNTING PROCEDURES

- a. There shall be no quick kicks.
 - i. Penalty – Illegal Procedure, 5 yards
- b. When a team punts, both the offensive and defensive teams must have a minimum of five (5) players on the line of scrimmage until the ball has been kicked.
- c. There shall be no rushing the punter, nor shall any defensive or offensive man cross the line of scrimmage until the ball has been kicked.
- d. If the punt hits a member of the punting team who has not crossed the line of scrimmage, it is dead at that spot and the receiving team’s ball.
- e. A punt that goes across the goal line and into the end zone is dead and no advance is permitted.
- f. A player of the receiving team shall be given an unmolested opportunity to catch the ball before it strikes ground.
- g. A fair catch shall be made when a player of the receiving team, who is beyond the neutral zone, signals his intention by raising either, but only one, arm distinctively above his head and waives it from side-to-side.
- h. When a player makes a fair catch, the ball becomes dead where the player first touched it.
- i. A muffed punt is dead at the spot it touches the ground.

RULE 17: OFFICIAL’S ELASTICITY CLAUSE

- 1. The flag football rules in this manual may not cover all rules/situations that may occur in a flag football game. Those rules and situations not covered in this manual will be governed by commonly accepted flag football rules as understood by the officials.

RULE 18: PENALTY ENFORCEMENT

- 1. If the penalty occurs during a loose ball play (either a pass or a punt), the penalty is enforced from the previous spot and the down is replayed. On a passing play, the team will be penalized from the spot of foul if behind line of scrimmage
- 2. On a running play, the penalty is enforced from either the spot of the foul or the end of the run, whichever hurts the team the most, and the down is replayed. If a team accepts the penalty, the down is replayed.
- 3. If there both teams are called for a foul or rule infraction on the same live ball, the fouls or rule infractions will cancel each other out and there are no yards marked off. The down is replayed.
- 4. A live ball foul and a dead ball foul do not cancel each other out. Each foul will be administered in the order of occurrence and the yardage stipulated for the foul.
- 5. When a foul or rule infraction by the offense occurs, then a change of possession immediately occurs (such as an intercepted pass); the ball would then belong to the team intercepting the pass and the foul or rule infraction would be negated.
 - o If the intercepting team also commits a foul or rule infraction while attempting to run with the ball during the same live ball play, there would be TWO LIVE BALL FOULS, but they WOULD NOT cancel each other out. The change of possession forces the intercepting team to decline the offensive foul or rule infraction, then accept possession of the ball, and finally be penalized for the foul that occurred during the attempted run after the interception.
 - o If the defensive team does not decline the offensive foul or rule infraction, then the offensive team will retain possession of the ball and be penalized for their foul or rule infraction.
- 6. An intercepted pass caught behind the goal line can be advanced. If the receiver doesn’t get out beyond the goal line and into the field of play it is still a touchback.
- 7. The first half or end of the game cannot end on a defensive penalty.
- 8. Two (2) unnecessary roughness penalties by the same player will result in ejection from the game.
- 9. Two (2) unsportsmanlike conduct by the same player or coach will result in ejection from the game and an additional one (1) game suspension.



SUMMARY OF PENALTIES

I. LOSS of **5** YARDS

- a. Delay of game
- b. Illegal Snap
- c. Illegal Defense
- d. Illegal Formation
- e. Illegal Kick
- f. Illegal Procedure
- g. False Start
- h. Illegal Motion / Shift
- i. Defensive Holding (Automatic 1st Down)
- j. Intentional Grounding (Loss of Down)
- k. Illegal Equipment (Ex: Flags not in place and / or visible)
- l. Illegal Forward Pass (Loss of Down)
- m. Putting the ball in play before being declared ready by the officials

2. LOSS of **10** YARDS

- a. Hurdling
- b. Tripping
- c. Flag guarding
- d. Illegal block
- e. Illegal contact
- f. Unnecessary roughness
- g. Offensive Pass Interference (Loss of Down)
- h. Defensive Pass Interference (Automatic 1st Down)
- i. Kick catch interference
- j. Roughing the passer (Automatic 1st Down AND Penalty yards added to the completed pass).

3. LOSS of **15** YARDS (possible ejection)

- a. Striking, kicking or kneeling an opponent.
- b. Unsportsmanlike Conduct.