

Flag Football League Rules

Revised: July 26, 2024



General Game Format:

1. All rules are subject to change anytime based on the New Lenox Community Park District's discretion. Any rules not stated will go by the NFL Flag rule book.
2. The New Lenox Community Park District - Flag Football League is played with a 5 on 5 player format.
 - *If one team cannot field five players and the other team has extras, the sides will be evened up and a game will be played. If players from one team do not want to play for another team, then both teams must play at equal strength. There are no forfeits! Remember, this is a learning experience for the participants.*
3. **Coaches, make sure all players get equal playing time and experience multiple positions on the field throughout the season.**
 - *We recommend for coaches to have a set of players that play offense for one half and defense for another half. This gives players experience on both sides of the ball.*
4. A coin toss shall begin each game. The away team will make the call. The team winning the toss will have two options:
 - First possession in the 1st half
 - A side to defend
5. The team that loses the toss will get the remaining option. At the start of the 2nd half, possession will be given to the team that started the game on defense and teams will switch direction.
6. All games will be played in **two 20-minute halves with a 3-minute half time.**
7. Games will be played with a running clock. Time will be stopped by the referee on injuries and time outs. Clock will resume on the following snap of the ball.
 - In the last 2 minutes of each half, the clock will only stop on **penalties, touchdowns** and on the change of possession. The clock will resume when the ball is set.
8. The clock will continue to run if a team is up by 24 or more points.
9. All possession changes, except interceptions, will start on the offense's 5-yard line.
 - **A defensive interception may be advanced by the player intercepting the ball until the player is ruled down or scores a touchdown. If the player does not score a touchdown, possession of the ball will start where the player was ruled down.**
10. If play is stopped due to injury, that player must sit out one play. If the clock is stopped due to injury within the final 2 minutes of the half or the game, a time-out will be charged to the team. If the team does not have a time-out, there is a 5 second runoff option for the opponent.
11. **All players are eligible receivers.**
12. Officials can stop the clock any time at their discretion.
13. **Each team is allowed one 60 second and one 30 second timeout per half. Time outs do not carry over from the 1st half and do not carry over into Overtime.**

Game Day Rules:

1. **Pre-Game Check:**
 - a. Before the start of the game, each team is to line up in front of the scorer's table with their backs facing the table. The staff will be checking the following items:
 - i. Jersey - Tucked into shorts/pants and player's numbers are visible
 - ii. Pants/Shorts: Colors within the shorts/pants cannot match the color of the flag belt
 - iii. Mouth Guards – Must have a mouth guard and be in good condition
 - iv. Flag Belts - clipped at the middle of the waist and not tied

v. Cleats – molded and not metal

2. **Home & Away Team Sidelines:**

- a. **Home Team:** Line up on the scoreboard side of the field for all games.
- b. **Away Team:** Line up on the opposite side of the scoreboard for all games.

3. **Spectators**

- a. All spectators must be at least 5 yards away from the perimeter of the field. This is for the safety of the kids who are playing the game as well as those who are watching the game.
- b. Spectators are not allowed on the team bench.

Uniform/Equipment:

1. **Players must remove all jewelry and hats before the game. Winter hats are allowed.**

2. **Jersey:**

- a. Jerseys must be tucked in at all times and cannot have any overlay covering the Flag Belt.
 - i. If a jersey is cut shorter because it is too long, it still must be able to be tucked in!

3. **Shorts/Pants:**

- a. The player's shorts/pants cannot have any color matching the color of their flag. If players do not have the proper shorts/pants, they are ineligible to play. (NO EXCEPTIONS)

4. **Flag Belt:**

- a. The flag belt must be clipped at the middle of the waist and the belt must be visible at all times. Any player found with the flag belt tied around their waist will result in an Unsportsmanlike Conduct Penalty.

5. **Mouth Guards:**

- a. All players must use a mouth guard. If the mouth guard is not all the way in at the snap of the ball, a Delay of Game Penalty will be enforced.

6. **Cleats/Shoes:**

- a. Players are allowed to wear molded rubber cleats or gym shoes. **Metal cleats are not allowed.**

7. **Game Day Footballs:**

- a. Both teams must use the game ball of the appropriate size provided by the staff.
- b. Football sizes for each division are shown below:
 - **Tike** – Pee Wee size football (Wilson K2)
 - **Junior** – Youth size football (Wilson TDY)
 - **Pee Wee** – Pee Wee size football (Wilson K2)
 - **Teen** - Youth size football (Wilson TDY)
 - **Youth** – Junior size football (Wilson TDJ)

Scoring:

- Touchdown = 6 points
- Extra Point = The ball will be spotted at the 7 yard line (5 yard line in Pee-Wee Division).
- The offense can either run or pass the ball.
 - 1 Point will be awarded for successfully crossing the goal line on a running attempt
 - 2 Points will be awarded for successfully completing a forward pass beyond the line of scrimmage and crossing the goal line
 - Screen plays, laterals, or any exchange behind the line of scrimmage will be considered a running attempt
- During an extra point, if the Defensive Team intercepts a pass and reaches the opposite end zone, they will be awarded the number of points the Offensive Team was attempting.
- There are no "Extra Points" in the Tike Division.
- Safety = 2 points (Turnover and ball goes to the defense)

Overtime Rules:

1. A coin flip will determine 1st OT possession. In overtime, teams will have only one 60 second time out.
 - o **Time outs are NOT carried over from the original game.**
2. Ball is placed on the 12-yard line and each team has a chance to score. (Follows college overtime rules)
3. There is no overtime in the Tike Division. The game will result in a tie.

Rules by Division:

Tike Division: Grade K

1. There are no referees for this division as the coaches will control the game.
2. Coaches are allowed on the field on both offense and defense, but should stay back far enough to avoid the play
3. **NO Blitzing**
4. Laterals and pitches are NOT allowed in the Tike divisions.
5. Interceptions may **not** be advanced in the Tike division. The defensive player is ruled down at the spot of the interception.
6. **No Extra Points allowed for the Tike Division.**
7. **Tike Division** – Defense is not allowed to rush in at the runner until that offensive player has crossed the line of scrimmage. **Please give these kids time to think about what they are doing and be able to hand the ball off without immediately getting their flag taken.**
8. There will be no overtime as the game will end in a tie.

Pee-Wee Division Grades 1-2

1. Coaches will come together during the captain's meeting and have the option to agree to play 6v6 or keep it 5v5. Both teams must say "yes" to playing with 6 players. If one team does not want to play 6v6, then it will remain 5v5 throughout the game. All rules will remain the same during 6v6.
2. One offensive coach is allowed on the field with the offense but should stand 10 yards behind the line of scrimmage during play. One defensive coach is allowed on the field to set the defense before the snap of the ball. The defensive coach must be off the field during play.
3. The center must hike the ball between the legs or off to the side of their body, either directly to the QB or in shotgun formation.
4. **For the first 4 games defensive players will not be allowed to cross the line of scrimmage. The defense cannot engage the ball carrier until that offensive player has crossed the LOS. Should that offensive player retreat back behind the LOS the defense can still pursue.**
5. **Starting game 5, Defensive players can begin crossing the LOS once the QB has transferred the ball to another player.**
 - o **This is to prepare the players for the next division.**
6. **NO Blitzing**
7. **Play or Punt:** If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, on 3 downs, they can either – elect to "go for it" to play 1 more down to receive the first down or elect to "punt" on 4th down.
 - o **Play:** If the offensive team goes for it on 4th down and does not achieve a 1st down, the opposing team will start its possession from the spot where the play ended.
 - o **Punt:** If the offensive team elects to "Punt", the possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its own 5-yard line.

Youth Division: Grades 3-4

1. Coaches will come together during the captain's meeting and have the option to agree to play 6v6 or keep it 5v5. Both teams must say "yes" to playing with 6 players. If one team does not want to play 6v6, then it will remain 5v5 throughout the game. All other rules will remain the same during 6v6.
2. One offensive coach is allowed on the field with the offense but should stand 10 yards behind the line of scrimmage during play. One defensive coach is allowed on the field to set the defense before the snap of the ball. The defensive coach must be off the field during play.
3. **The center must hike the ball between the legs** either directly to the QB or shotgun.
4. **NO Blitzing**
5. **Play or Punt:** If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, on 3 downs, they can either – elect to "go for it" to play 1 more down to receive the first down or elect to "punt" on 4th down.
 - o **Play:** If the offensive team goes for it on 4th down and does not achieve a 1st down, the opposing team will start its possession from the spot where the play ended.
 - o **Punt:** If the offensive team elects to "Punt", the possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its own 5-yard line.

Junior Division: Grades 5-6

1. One coach is allowed to be in the huddle during offense or defense but must be off the field before the snap of the ball.
2. **The center must hike the ball between the legs** either directly to the QB or shotgun.
3. Teams will be allowed limited blitzing for the first 4 games in order to slowly incorporate blitzing to the game. Each team will be allowed 3 blitzes per game. The blitzing team **MUST** notify one of the referees prior to the start of a play of their intention to use one of their 3 blitzes during the first 4 games. Teams are able to begin unlimited blitzing, starting Game 5. Starting Game 5, Coaches will come together during the captains meeting and have the option to come to an agreement to not blitz. Both teams must say "no" to blitzing to call off the blitz. If one team wants to blitz, then blitzing will be allowed throughout the game.
 - o **Only 1 player is allowed to blitz**
 - o *This is to prepare the kids for the next division.*
4. **Play or Punt:** If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, on 3 downs, they can either – elect to "go for it" to play 1 more down to receive the first down or elect to "punt" on 4th down.
 - o **Play:** If the offensive team goes for it on 4th down and does not achieve a 1st down, the opposing team will start its possession from the spot where the play ended.
 - o **Punt:** If the offensive team elects to "Punt", the possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its own 5-yard line.

Teen Division: Grades 7-8

1. One coach is allowed to be in the huddle during offense or defense but must be off the field before the snap of the ball. **Starting game 3 - No coaches are allowed on the field during play.**
 - o If a time out is called, one coach may go into the huddle with the offense or defense.
2. **The center must hike the ball between the legs** either directly to the QB or shotgun.
3. Can blitz the entire season.
 - o **Only 1 player is allowed to blitz**
4. **Play or Punt:** If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, on 3 downs, they can either – elect to "go for

it" to play 1 more down to receive the first down or elect to "punt" on 4th down.

- **Play:** If the offensive team goes for it on 4th down and does not achieve a 1st down, the opposing team will start its possession from the spot where the play ended.
- **Punt:** If the offensive team elects to "Punt", the possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its own 5-yard line.

5. There will be a Single Elimination Tournament to conclude the season.

Offense:

1. The offensive team takes possession of the ball on their 5-yard line and has 3 plays to cross mid-field to get a first down unless they elect to go for it on 4th down in lieu of punting. See play or punt rule. Once a team crosses mid-field, they have 3 plays to score a touchdown or elect to go for it on 4th down, see play or punt rule. **(Once a team gets a first down and then lose yardage, they CAN NOT get another 1st down).**
 - **All players are eligible receivers.**
2. If the offensive team fails to cross mid-field or fails to score a touchdown, possession of the ball changes and the opposing team will start their drive from the 5-yard line.
 - **All divisions except Tike will follow the "Play or Punt" rule.**
3. Offense will consist of a center, quarterback and 3 other positions of your choice.
 - **The 3 other offensive positions must be at least an arm's length apart. "Bunch" formations are illegal!**
4. The center must be lined up over the football.
5. Each time the referee spots the ball, the offensive team will have 40 seconds to begin the next play. Following a time out the offensive team will have 25 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty will be enforced.
6. The quarterback cannot run with the ball past the line of scrimmage unless there is a defensive blitz.
 - **The quarterback will be designated as the player who receives the ball from the center, regardless of where the players are positioned on the field.**
7. All direct hand-offs can be made **in any direction**, as long as, it is behind the line of scrimmage. Laterals or pitches must be made behind or directly to the side of the quarterback, as well as behind the line of scrimmage. The offense may use multiple hand-offs as long as they occur behind the line of scrimmage.
 - Hand-offs, laterals and pitches will all be defined as running plays.
 - A lateral is any thrown ball to a receiver who is directly to the side or behind the quarterback. This will be considered a running play.
 - **QB is not allowed to hand the ball off back to the center through the center's legs. The center is not considered behind the LOS they are on the LOS. The center would need to be behind the LOS to accept the hand-off, lateral or pitch. This will be considered an illegal play and a penalty will be enforced if it occurs.**
8. All passes must be received beyond the line of scrimmage. "Shovel" passes are allowed but it must be caught beyond the line of scrimmage.
9. Passes may be thrown by the quarterback or any other player who receives the ball from the quarterback as long as it is a handoff, lateral or pitch from behind the line of scrimmage.
10. We follow IHSA rules on a completed catch, which is one foot down inbounds to be legally called as a catch
11. Quarterback clock: The quarterback has 7-seconds to throw the ball. If the ball does not leave the quarterback's hands after the 7-seconds, the quarterback is "sacked". The ball will be spotted at the original line of scrimmage.

12. Once the ball leaves the quarterback's hands, the 7-second clock is eliminated, and all defensive players are allowed to rush. The 7-second quarterback clock is also eliminated after a defensive blitz.
13. **Running plays are acceptable on all downs and all locations on the field. There will be no restrictions on when a team can attempt a running play.**
14. Spinning is allowed by the ball carrier; however, they cannot jump or dive to elude a tackler.
15. The ball will be spotted where the football is when the flag is pulled. On a fumble, the ball will be spotted where the ball touches the ground, unless it is fumbled forward and it will be spotted where the runner lost control of the ball.
16. **The ball carrier will be ruled down and the play will be over when one of the following occur:**
 - The ball carrier's flag is pulled
 - The ball carrier runs out of bounds
 - The ball carrier's body from their waistline and down touches the ground
 - The ball carrier is touched after flag falls off voluntarily
 - The ball carrier scores a touchdown
 - Once the ball hits the ground on a fumble.
17. If a defender squares up in front of the ball carrier to make a tackle, the ball carrier must try to elude the defensive player. If the offensive player runs into the defense, a blocking penalty will be called on the offense.
18. **No blocking or screening is allowed by the offense.**
 - *Blocking: Any time an offensive player intentionally makes contact with a defender.*
 - *Screening: Any time an offensive player intentionally hinders a defender from the most direct path of the ball carrier. No contact is necessary.*
 - *Blocking and screening calls will be judgment calls by the referee and cannot be questioned by a coach or player.*
 - *It is recommended that all offensive players without the ball immediately stop, once the offense has possession and has passed the line of scrimmage.*
19. One player may be in motion at the snap of the ball. If more than one player is in motion before the play, they must be set for 1 second before the snap of the ball.
20. The defensive player(s) blitzing will line up at least 7 yards behind the line of scrimmage and cannot lineup over the center. **Once the defense crosses the line of scrimmage on a blitz, the offense is allowed to advance the ball.**
 - *A referee will stand 7-yards from the Line of Scrimmage to designate the blitz line.*

Defense:

1. Defense will consist of 5 players, lined up in any formation.
2. A defender may not intentionally make contact with an offensive player.
 - ***There will be absolutely no diving (Player leaves their feet) for flags allowed. A penalty will be enforced regardless of whether the defender pulls the flag or not.***
3. The player(s) blitzing must line up at least 7 yards behind the line of scrimmage and cannot lineup over the center. **Once the defense crosses the line of scrimmage on a blitz, the quarterback is allowed to advance the ball.**
 - *A referee will stand 7-yards from the Line of Scrimmage to designate the blitz line.*
4. NO BLITZING will be allowed when a TEAM is up by 18+ points
5. Interceptions must be advanced by the player intercepting the ball; **the player may not pitch, lateral or hand the ball off to a teammate.**
6. If the defensive team is up by 24 or more points and an interception is made, then the player is down at the spot of the interception.

Penalties:

- All penalties may be accepted or declined by the opposing team.

Offensive Penalties:

Off-Sides	5 yards from the line of scrimmage (LOS) <i>Ball is whistled dead immediately, the outcome of the play is not allowed, the ball is spotted 5 yards from the original LOS and the down will be replayed.</i>
Delay of Game	5 yards from the LOS <i>The ball is spotted 5 yards from the original LOS and the down will be replayed.</i>
Illegal Motion	5 yards from the LOS <i>The ball is spotted 5 yards from the original LOS and the down will be replayed</i> <i>Ball is whistled dead immediately, the outcome of the play is not allowed.</i>
Illegal Forward Pass	5 yards from the LOS <i>The ball is spotted 5 yards from the original LOS and the down will be replayed</i> <i>This can only take place if the passer crosses the line of scrimmage before throwing the ball</i>
Illegal Play	5 yards from the LOS and loss of down. <i>Ex 1: Team huddles up and hides the ball and one teammate comes out with the ball and confuses the other team.</i> <i>Ex 2: QB directly hands the ball back to the center through the center's legs. (They are still on the LOS, not behind it)</i>
Illegal "Bunch" Formation	5 yards from the LOS and loss of down.
Offensive Pass Interference	5 yards from the LOS and loss of down.
Flag Guarding	10 yards from the <i>spot of the foul</i> and loss of down.
Screening/Blocking	5 yards from the <i>spot of the foul</i> and loss of down.
Illegal Contact	5 yards from the <i>spot of the foul</i> and loss of down.
QB Runs	5 yards from the LOS and loss of down. Does not apply when defense blitzes
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	During the Play: 10 yards from the LOS and loss of down. After the Play: 10 yards from the end of the play

Defensive Penalties:

- Offensive Team can refuse any penalty and take the result of the play
- The half or the game cannot end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines the penalty.

Off-Sides	5 yards from the LOS
Illegal Rushing	5 yards from the LOS
Pass Interference	Offense is awarded the ball at the spot of the foul Automatic 1 st down
Illegal Flag Pull (Before the receiver has the ball)	5 yards from the LOS - Automatic 1 st down
Illegal Contact	5 yards from the spot of the foul - Automatic 1 st down
Illegal Dive	5 yards from the LOS
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	10 yards from the LOS - Automatic 1 st down

Illegal Contact:

- Illegal contact shall be interpreted as any contact made by a defensive player that impedes or alters the offensive players freedom of movement during a play. Such contact can include but are not limited to holding a players jersey or clothing, tripping, or pushing a player. All illegal contact penalties are at the referee's discretion.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct / Roughing:

- If the referee or field monitor witnesses any deliberate acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, or any other physical acts, the game will be stopped, the player will be removed for the remainder of the game.
- Players may celebrate with their teammates but cannot celebrate in a choreographed way as taunting.
- Arguing with the officials or constantly verbally abusing the officials will not be tolerated. If this occurs a warning will be given and then a penalty will be enforced. Depending on the severity, the player, coach or fan may be ejected without warning from the game. If the player, coach or fan will not leave, the police will be called.
- If a coach walks onto the field to question an official, the team will be charged a time out or delay of game. If a coach wants clarification on a rule interpretation or a play, they can ask the referee coordinator after the play, at half time or after the game.
- All spectators are responsible for showing good sportsmanship towards the coaches, referees and opposing team. Failure to do so will result in a penalty to your team, and they will be asked to leave the premises.