

2024 3rd-6th Grade Spring Flag Football Rules

Avon Lake, Fairview Park, North Olmsted, & North Ridgeville

(OHSAA rules are in effect unless otherwise noted)

League Points of Emphasis

- Each city, if entering more than 1 team in a league, MUST split teams as evenly as reasonably possible regarding both skill level and age/grade level. For example, in the 3rd-4th grade league a team should not have all 4th graders.
- All participants must exhibit good sportsmanship at all times
- Respect and cooperate with officials
- Chatter and cheering must be of positive nature and directed to ones' own team. Abusive and vulgar language will not be tolerated
- Facilities, fields, and equipment will be treated with respect
- Any ejection will result in an additional one-week suspension from all team activities including practices and the following game. This goes for players, coaches, & parents.
- Any coach or player ejected from two or more games during the season may be expelled from the league.
- If any offender is asked to leave the grounds and fails to do so, the game will be suspended until the offender leaves the premises. Failure to do so may result in a forfeit

Section 1: Coaches

- Each team will have a maximum of (4) coaches in the bench area
 - Grades K-2: two (2) Coaches allowed on the field during plays
 - Grades 3-4: one (1) Coach allowed on the field during plays
 - Grades 5-6: zero (0) coaches allowed on the field during plays
- Offensively coaches must be a minimum of 5-yards behind the quarterback. Defensively coaches must be a minimum of 5-yards behind the safety
- Every effort should be made for each player to play at least half of the game.
 - Communicate in writing if you as a coach have players who miss practices unexcused and will be playing less than half the game

Section 2: Pregame Meeting

- Pregame meeting will take place 10 minutes prior to game time
- Referees will check every player's equipment (flags, mouthpiece, and cleats) before each game
- Every game will start with a coin toss, with the Home team calling the flip
 - The winner of the coin toss will have the choice to start offense or defense
 - The team that starts on defense in the first half will start on offense in the second half.
 - The home team will be defined on the schedule.
- Each team must have a minimum of 5 players present at game time or they will be required to forfeit.

Section 3: Game Play

- Lineups are 7 players on offense, 7 players on defense
- Each team will supply one (1) football for offense. Football Sizes
 - **K-2nd** grade: **Pee Wee** size football
 - **3rd-4th** grade: **Junior** size football
 - **5th-6th** grade: **Youth** size football
- Games in all divisions shall consist of two (2) 20-minute halves. Running clock except for the last two minutes of the first and second half, the clock will stop in accordance with high school rules.
- A 25-second play clock will be in effect once the Referee marks the ball ready for play
- Assigned referees will keep time on the field
- Halftime – Five (5) minutes

Section 4: Playing Field Size

- 33.5 yds wide by 40 yds long with one (1) 10-yard end zone
- The field will be divided into four (4) zones of 10 yards each

Section 5: Equipment

- All players are required to wear a protective mouthpiece when on the field
- All players in the game must be wearing a flag belt, with at least two (2) flags per belt. The belt must be worn on the hips, with one flag on each hip. Flag cannot match the color of the player's shorts/pants
- Players should not wear shorts/pants that have pockets or drawstrings that cannot be tucked. All players shall tuck their shirts inside their shorts while playing
- No jewelry, metal cleats, or headgear containing hard, unyielding material, including billed hats. No casts (soft or hard) are allowed
- Towel attached at a player's waist is considered a flag and if pulled off the player is considered down at that spot

Section 6: Offense

- 3 "linemen" must be on the line of scrimmage at the start of each play.
- There must be at least four (4) offensive players on the line (including linemen) when the ball is snapped
- The three (3) offensive linemen must not line up wider than arm's length apart; fingertips to fingertips (but may line up closer)
- The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between his/her legs or from the side
- If the snapped ball does not make it to the quarterback or is snapped over the quarterback's head, the ball is blown dead at the first bounce. Play will resume at the same line of scrimmage, without loss of yardage (only loss of down).
 - Note: For Grades 1-2 we will replay the down once without penalty; second time is a loss of down. This applies to all snaps during the course of the game (first botched snap is simply redo, second is a loss of down).
 - Note: the half or game cannot end on a botched snap (for Grades 1-2), even if the time

clock has expired.

- There are no fumbles, whether caused by an offensive drop, the ground, or by a defender. If the ball is dropped (forward or backward), the ball is dead once it hits the ground and the next play will resume from that point
- Interceptions thrown by the offensive team are blown dead
- The blocker can block the path of the oncoming rusher and make them change directions
- Contact will be tolerated unless deemed forceful and/or malicious
- Only one (1) offensive player can be in motion at a time, prior to the snap of the ball. That player may NOT advance to the line of scrimmage prior to the snap of the ball (must move parallel to the line of scrimmage)
- Lateral passes are allowed, both behind and beyond the line of scrimmage
- All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line)
- A player must have one foot inbounds when making a reception
- Shovel passes are allowed
- First downs will be at the 30-YD, 20-YD, and 10-YD field markers

Section 7: The Ball Carrier

- Guarding the flag belt or otherwise hindering the deflagger is illegal and considered “flag guarding”. An untucked t-shirt is considered flag guarding. There is no penalty, except the ball is considered dead at the spot of the foul and the next play resumes at that spot.
- A ball carrier should not have a belt end hanging loose so that it can be gripped as a flag
- A ball carrier may NOT hurdle or jump over a pile to score a touchdown or gain a first down. Players are allowed to leave their feet to avoid being de-flagged (jucking/jump, stopping)
- The ball carrier is down when his/her knee hits the ground, even if the flag belt is still on
- Stiff arming is not allowed (defined as: arm extended out)
- An open field ball carrier must attempt to avoid a defender. The ball carrier must not run over or through a defender.
- **Blocking is allowed** with hands! No Shoulder Blocks!
- Correct Blocking technique includes shooting hands inside with thumbs up. The aiming point is the numbers/armpits of the defender. Heads up at all times!
- You must be in front of the defender you are blocking. No blocking in the back. This will result in a penalty
- No dive or roll Blocks. Contact must take place above the waist and below the neck

Section 8: Defense

- All divisions may run man-to-man or zone defense.
- All defensive players must start at or beyond the 2 yard “neutral zone” as marked by the officials.
- Defenses must at least use a 2 Defensive Ends line to start each play and must line up at the line of scrimmage.
- Interceptions cannot be returned. Interceptions will result in an immediate dead ball

Section 9: Rushing The Quarterback

- The rusher must be located 7 yards off the line of scrimmage prior to the snap of the ball. The official will the defender know how far back they must be. The rusher will also be designated with a wristband. Only 1 (one) player may rush the passer.
- Any defensive player may cross the line of scrimmage once a handoff has occurred, or the QB is outside the tackle box but not before the QB has committed to a run
- The rushers can NOT immediately rush the center/guard gap (A Gap)
- An illegal A gap rush is defined when a defensive end who is lined up head up/outside shade of guard makes an immediate move to the A Gap with his lower body upon the snap of the football. (Slanting/Firing the gap will be penalized)
- Defensive Ends must engage the center/outside shade of the Guard. Then they can react to the ball
- If a player crosses the line of scrimmage prior to the handoff and does not have a wristband encroachment will be called (5 YD penalty & repeat down)
- If the defensive team is ahead by 17 points or more, no rushing is allowed. A 5 yd penalty will be enforced from the LOS if the defensive team sacks the quarterback
- Teams are not required to rush the quarterback
- Rushers may attempt to block a pass. However, NO intentional contact can be made with the quarterback or passer in any way (may be considered roughing the passer)
- A sack occurs if the QB's flag belt is pulled behind the line of scrimmage

Section 10: Deflagging

- The deflagger must take the flag from the ball carrier by playing the flag and not the ball carrier. No holding, wrapping up, or excessively raking is allowed
- It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball carrier's possession or quarterback's hand at any time
- A defender cannot run through the ball carrier or use unnecessary roughness in removing or attempting to remove flags
- A defender can force the ball carrier out of bounds in an effort to pull the flags. Pushing, shoving, or other malicious acts will not be tolerated and will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty
- A player may not deflag an opponent unless that opponent is in possession of the ball or faking as though in possession or has just lost possession of the ball
- If a ball carrier's flags fall off without being pulled by the defense, the officials shall announce a DEAD BALL. Ball will be spotted where the ball carrier possessed the ball when the flag last was in place

Section 11: Punting

- There is no punting. If the offensive team fails to achieve a first down or after 4 downs, the ball will be turned over to the opposing team and play will resume with a 1st and 10 at the initial starting point (40-yard line)

Section 12: Scoring

- All touchdowns are 6 points

- Point After Touchdown (PAT)
 - One **(1)** point from the **3-yard** line
 - Two **(2)** points from the **7-yard** line
 - Once the offensive decision has been made, the team may change the decision only by taking a charged team timeout
- **Safeties** - NO safeties are allowed
- **Field Goals** - NO field goals are allowed

Section 13: Time-Outs

- Each team is entitled to two (2) charged timeouts per half
- Each time-out will be one (1) minute in length
- A time-out may be called by any player and/or coach
- If a team exceeds their time-out limits per half or during OT, a delay of game penalty will be assessed

Section 14: Penalties

- All penalties will be marked 5 or 10 yards (SEE CHART ON LAST PAGE)
- All 10-yard penalties within the 15 yards of the goal line will be marked off as “half the distance to the goal”

General Penalties

Infraction	Penalty	Marked From	Coach Choice	Loss Of Down
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Improper Equipment	5 yds	LOS	NO	NO
Delay of Game (Time Outs)	5 yds	Result of Play	NO	NO
Illegal Substitution	5 yds	LOS	YES	NO
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	10 yds	LOS/Result of Play	YES/NO	NO
Faking Excessive Contact	10 yds	10 Yards Result of Play	NO	NO
Unnecessary Roughness	5 yds	Spot Foul	YES	NO

Offensive Penalties

Infraction	Penalty	Marked From	Coach Choice	Loss Of Down
Illegal Forward Pass	5 yds	Spot Foul	YES	YES
Pass Interference	5 yds	LOS	YES	NO
Offsides	5 yds	LOS	YES	NO
Stiff Arm	5 yds	Spot Foul	YES	YES
Sideline Interference	10 yds	LOS	YES	YES
Holding	5 yds	Spot Foul	YES	NO

Defensive Penalties

Infraction	Penalty	Marked From	Coach Choice	Loss Of Down
Illegal Rushing	5 yds	LOS	YES	NO
Roughing Passer	10 yds	LOS	YES	YES
Pass Interference	5 yds	Spot Foul	YES	YES
Stripping	5 yds	Spot Foul	YES	YES
Illegal Deflagging	5 yds	LOS	YES	NO
Shoving Out of Bounds	5 yds	Spot Foul	YES	NO
Sideline Interference	10 yds	Result of Play	YES	YES
Encroachment	5 yds	LOS	YES	NO
Holding	5 yds	LOS	YES	NO