



Youth Flag Football Rules

PRE-GAME INFORMATION

1. All players must be registered with the City of Covington's Parks & Recreation NFL Flag Football program before participating in any league activities.
2. Participants must be between the grade Kinder and 8th grade.
3. The league is divided into four (5) divisions: Kinder, 1st/2nd, 3rd/4th, 5th/6th & 7th/8th grade.
4. All players will receive a reversible NFL Flag Football jersey and flags.
5. Teams are composed of a minimum of eight (8) and a maximum of twelve (12) players. There are five (5) players per team playing on the field.
6. The Athletic Coordinator in charge of the Covington NFL Flag Football program reserves the right to add players to and/or move players from teams if he/she feels it is necessary.
7. Scheduled practice times will be once a week for approximately 1 hour.
8. Parents, families and friends must sit on the opposite side of the field from the players and coaches during the game.
9. The playing field is 30 yards wide x 70 yards long. End zones are 10 yards deep. Corners of the playing field and yard zones will be marked with orange pylons.
10. Parents and spectators are strongly encouraged to promote good sportsmanship among all participants. All parents and spectators will treat officials and staff with respect. Please remember that many of them are volunteers and you are providing an example to your children when you are in attendance at practices/games.

ATTIRE

1. Cleats and gym shoes are allowed, except for metal spikes. Inspections can and will be made. No bare feet or open toed shoes allowed.
2. ONLY pocket-less shorts or pants are allowed.
3. Flags must be worn on the hips.
4. Jerseys must be tucked in at all times.
5. Players are required to wear a protective mouthpiece during all practices and games. **No Exceptions.** Any participant without a mouthpiece will not be allowed to participate in any practice or game. Players are responsible for providing their own mouthpiece.
6. All players are required to wear their official Covington NFL Flag Football jersey and flags during games.
7. Players are responsible for taking care of their own NFL Flag Football jersey and mouthpiece.

GETTING STARTED

1. A coin toss determines the first possession. The team losing the coin toss will determine which way they will play during the 1st half.
2. Game length is two (2) – 20 minute running clock halves. Each team is allowed (1) – 60 second time out and (1) 30 second time out per half. There may be an official timeout to assist an injured player at the discretion of the referee. There will be a three (3) minute half time break.
3. The offensive team takes possession of the ball on their own five (5) yard line and has three (4) plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three (4) plays to score a touchdown. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on its own five (5) yard line.
4. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its five (5) yard line.
5. The ball must be snapped between the legs to start play.

DURING THE GAME

1. There are no kickoffs or punts.
2. There is no blocking allowed at anytime anywhere on the field. Once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage all players on offense are no longer part of the play. Creating a screen or wall for the ball carrier will be considered a block.
3. All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's five (5) yard line.
4. Teams change sides after the first 20 minute half. The losing team of the coin toss at the beginning of the game will gain ball possession at the beginning of the second half.
5. Each time the ball is spotted a team has thirty (30) seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one (1) warning per game before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.
6. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
7. If a defensive penalty occurs on an extra point try, the offensive team retains possession of the ball with the ball being placed $\frac{1}{2}$ distance to the goal line. The offensive team has the option to decline the penalty.
8. One coach is allowed on the field at all times.

SCORING

1. All scores will be worth (6) points.
2. An extra point may be worth (1) point from the 5 yard line or (2) points from the 12 yard line.
3. The extra point being taken from the 5 yard line will be a pass play ONLY. The extra point worth (2) points from the 12 yard line may be a run OR pass play.

RUNNING

1. The quarterback cannot run/scramble with the ball.
2. Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. The offense may use multiple handoffs. Once the handoffs takes place all defensive players are eligible to rush.
3. Absolutely **NO** laterals or pitches of any kind.
4. "No-running zones," located five (5) yards from each end zone and five (5) yards on either side of the midfield, are designed to avoid short-yardage, power running situations. In these zones there is to be no running or hand-offs. Once a team gets a first down the no-run-zone no longer applies at mid-field. Each team may only get one first down.
5. The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
6. Once the ball has been motioned to be handed off, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
7. Spinning and jump cuts are allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a defensive player. No diving, hurdling, or jumping to avoid a flag being pulled. If a player should dive or jump to avoid a flag being pulled the play shall be called dead at the point of the incident.
8. The use of a "stiff arm" to ward off an opponent is prohibited.
9. The ball is spotted from where the ball carrier's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.
10. Center sneaks are NOT allowed.

RECEIVING

1. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
2. As in the NFL, only one (1) player is allowed in motion at a time.
3. A player must have at least one (1) foot inbounds when making a reception.

PASSING

1. All passes must be forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage.
2. Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
3. The quarterback has a seven (7) second "pass clock". If a pass is not thrown within the seven (7) seconds, the play is dead, loss of down. Once a ball is handed off the seven (7) second rule is no longer in effect.
4. Interceptions change the possession of the ball at the point of interception.
5. Interceptions are the only changes of possession that do not start on the five (5) yard line.

DEAD BALLS

1. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
2. Play is ruled "dead" when:
 - Ball carrier's flag is pulled.
 - Ball carrier's flag falls off.
 - Ball carrier steps out of bounds.
 - Ball carrier's knee hits the ground.
 - Ball carrier should leave their feet.
 - Ball carrier should attempt to dive.
 - Touchdown or safety is scored.
 - At the point of the ball hits the ground (center/QB exchange or fumble).
3. There are no fumbles. No recovery of a "fumble" is necessary or should be attempted. The ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground with the offense keeping possession, unless the fumble lands in the endzone behind the offensive line of scrimmage resulting in a safety.

RUSHING THE QUARTERBACK

1. One and only one player must rush the quarterback. The player who rushes the quarterback must start the rush from directly behind the designated rushing marker which will be placed ten (10) yards from the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is snapped the player may start the rush. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage.
2. Once the ball has been handed off, the ten (10) yard rule is no longer in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage. A special marker, or the referee, will designate ten (10) yards from the line of scrimmage. Remember, NO blocking, screening or tackling is allowed.
3. The rusher may not touch the QB at any time. This will result in roughing the passer. Rusher should be pulling flags and not trying to deflect the pass.

SPORTSMANSHIP/ROUGHING

1. Foul play will not be tolerated.
2. Any acts of unsportsmanlike conduct will be treated as such:
 - No excessive touchdown celebrations
 - No trash talking or foul language (any talk considered demeaning or offensive)
 - No excessive physical play (elbows, tackling, pushing, blocking, etc)

EJECTION'S and SUSPENSIONS

1. Any coach/player/spectator ejected from a game may be suspended for a minimum of one (1) game, possibly longer if warranted. That one (1) game shall be the next scheduled game. Any coach receiving an ejection or suspension may be released from their coaching duties for the remainder of the season.

BLEEDING and EXPOSED BLOOD

1. Any player with a bleeding wound and/or blood stained clothing must leave the game until all bleeding is stopped, all wounds are properly covered and all exposed blood and blood stained clothing is removed.
2. Any player and/or coach failing to comply with the official's decision concerning the clean up of a bleeding wound and/or the removal of blood stained clothing shall be ejected from the game.
3. Any player and/or coach ejected from league play for failing to comply with the officials decision concerning the clean up of a bleeding wound and/or the removal of blood stained clothing shall be suspended for one (1) game. A second such ejection will result is suspension for the remainder of the season.

COACHES, LET YOUR KIDS PLAY

- While teaching football skills and strategies is important, try to keep your lessons as simple and fun as possible. As your team grasps the basics, move on too more advanced ideas. Overloading young players with too much information too early can cause them confusion and you headaches. **REMEMBER TO HAVE FUN!!!**
- Help your players be good sports. After a game, shake hands with or do a cheer for the other team. Applaud good play on both sides. Treat all officials with respect. While imitating you, your team won't even know they are being taught a good lesson in sportsmanship.
- Regardless of whether it's a game or practice, football at the youth level should always be fun. This requires a little creativity on your part, the parent/coach, to offer fun and to adapt methods throughout all aspects of the program. Incorporate games and low-key competitions to teach fundamentals rather than running traditional drills repeatedly.
- Shout encouragement and whisper constructive criticism. Keep all comments positive and never tolerate negative comments from your players, parents, staff and especially yourself.