



City of Denton Parks & Recreation Department Youth Flag Football League – Rules & Regulations Revised 1/23/2024

LEAGUE INFO Please contact us at athletics@cityofdenton.com for any questions regarding the league. Visit the league website for game results, standings, registration information, and schedules at: www.teamsideline.com/denton

No refunds will be granted once registration has ended. There will be no refunds for games cancelled due to inclement weather. Games will try to be rescheduled during the season if possible. Exception: If league is cancelled due to COVID-19 or any other infectious diseases, credits and/or refunds will be given.

I. ELIGIBILITY

- a. All players must be in the appropriate age division as defined by league registration. See below for a breakdown. *League division may be subject to combining age divisions for teams to make.*
 - i. 7U Division (Ages 5-7)
 - ii. 9U Division (Ages 8-9)
 - iii. 11U Division (Ages 10-11)
 - iv. 13U Division (Ages 12-13)
- b. Age is determined by the participant's age as of September 1 of the current school year.
- c. **Coaches:** All coaches, including assistant coaches, must complete a background check with the City of Denton. **Please reach out to the Athletics Office to complete this process.**

II. ROSTER

- a. To participate in the league, players must either be registered as an individual or be on a team roster. The roster can be updated until, the Friday before the last regular season game (Before playoffs). All additions must go directly to the Athletic Office, along with signature on roster and birth certificate. Players cannot be added on roster at the games.
- b. A maximum of 10 players may be carried on a roster, depending on division. **Rosters must be turned in to the Athletics Office two weeks prior to the advertised season games start date.**
- c. No player may play on more than (1) team per season. A player may choose to play up one age division but cannot play down an age division.
- d. If a team is caught with an illegal player by a protest. It will be an automatic forfeit and no make-up game for that team.

III. FIELD & EQUIPMENT

- a. **Field:** Field Dimensions for the Game will be as follows
 - i. 7u-9u: 25 yards wide and 60 Yards Long
 - ii. 11U+: 30 yards wide and 70 Yards Long (No Run zones will be marked on the field)
- b. **Game Ball Specs:** The ball will be provided by NFL Flagthe league and sizes will differ in the separate age group as follows:
 - i. 7U Division: Size 4 (Mini)
 - ii. 9U Division: Size 5(PeeWee)
 - iii. 11U & 13U Divisions: Wilson TDJ or equivalent (Junior size 6)
 - iv. *Please Note: Each team is responsible for their own ball as to retrieving it after an incomplete pass and keeping dry during adverse weather conditions.*
- c. **Sonic Flags:** The sonic flag belts will be provided by the athletic league for games. Flags are provided by NFL Flaf Equipment

d. Uniform/Jersey Specs:

- i. All Teams created by the league will use Jerseys provided by NFL Flag Equipment, All NFL Jerseys will not have numbers provided on Jerseys.
- ii. All players on incoming teams shall have at least a 4" number on the front AND a 6" number on the back of their jersey. Legal numbers are 0-99. Jersey's do not have to be reversible. Players who registered as an individual will be provided with a jersey. Established teams must provide their own jerseys.
- iii. Each player must provide and wear a protective mouth guard. Players without mouth guards will not allowed to play.

IV. PLAYING REGULATIONS

a. Team Composition:

- i. 7U-13U Division will play 5-on-5 format.
- ii. A team can play with as few as (4) for the 7U Division and with (4) players for the 9U-13U before forfeiting.
- iii. *Format subject to change depending on league numbers.*

b. Periods

- i. 7U-9U division: The game shall be played in 4 Quarters of 8 minutes (32 minutes total) with a (1) minute break between quarters.
- ii. 11U-13U divisions: The game shall be played in 4 Quarters of 12 minutes. (48 minutes total) with a (1) minute break between quarters.
- iii. In all games, the clock will run continuous except for timeouts and injuries and the clock will stop for all whistles the last 10 seconds of the 4th Quarter Unless the score has a spread greater 1 score or 8 points

c. Half-Time & Time-Outs

- i. Half-time shall be two (2) minutes in length.
- ii. Each team will receive one (1) timeout per half of 30 seconds in length.

d. Coaches on the playing field

- i. The head coach or assistant coach only can be on the playing field during the game for the first four games of the season for the 7U-13U divisions.
- ii. Coaches may remain on the field all season for the 7U & 9U division but are encouraged to not be on the field for the 2nd half of the season. Only one coach may be on the playing field at one time.

e. Player Participation Rule

- i. 7U-9U division: Each player who is listed on the lineup card is required to play minimum of 2 quarters.
- ii. 11U-13U division: Each player who is listed on the lineup card is required to play minimum of 1 quarter.

f. Substitutions

- i. 7U-9U division: If available, substitutions must be made during the start of each quarter.
- ii. 11U-13U Division: Substitutions can be made with change of possession.
- iii. The player(s) must check in with the scorekeeper prior to entering the game. The official shall resume play by blowing the whistle.

V. GAME RULES

- a. The home team will decide if they want to start on offense, or defense and the side of the field they would like to occupy. Teams will change sides after halftime.
- b. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four (4) downs to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three (3) downs to score a touchdown.
- c. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, on 3 downs, and elect to "punt" on 4th down, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its own 5-yard line. If the offensive team goes for it on

4th down and does not cross field, the opposing team will start its possession from the spot. Teams may use a timeout only to change the declaration of "Play" at any time prior to the expiration of the play clock.

- d. Offensive Teams MUST declare 4th down intent; "Play or Punt", when asked by the referee and prior to the 'Ready for Play'. If the declaration is "Punt" the ball changes possession and will be placed at the opposing Team's 5-yard line, 1st down, with NO option to change the declaration.
- e. If the offense fails to score, after crossing midfield the ball changes possession and the new offensive Team starts at its 5-yard line. Touchdowns will be worth six (6) points. Extra points are valued as follows: (1) point from 5 yards out and two (2) points from 10 yards out. A safety is worth two (2) points.
- f. Safety: A Safety occurs when the ball carrier is declared down in his/her own end zone. They can be called down when their flags are pulled by a defensive player, their flag falls out, they step out of bounds or they hit the ground with their knee or arm. A Safety also occurs when there is an offensive penalty in the end zone. **The 2 points and ball will then be giving to the team who forced the safety.**
- g. Offensive players in close proximity of the ball-carrier must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. No running with the ball-carrier.
- h. No blocking or "screening" is allowed at any time
- i. **Overtime Rule**
 - i. Regular Season: If the game ends in a tie, no overtime will be played.
 - ii. Playoffs: If the game ends in a tie, an overtime will be observed and will be played by the following guidelines.
 1. Coin toss determine possession.
 2. Each team receives the ball at midfield with 3 plays.
 3. Interceptions will end series. Yardage accrued remains in effect.
 4. If no touchdown is scored in overtime each team will take turns getting one (1) play from the defense's 5-yard line for one point or the defense's 10-yard line for two points. Whether to go for one or two points is up to the offensive team. Whether or not the team that begins on offense converts the team that started on defense gets a chance on offense to win or tie by converting a one- or two-point play of their own.
 - a. **Example**: Team A starts on offense and chooses to go for one point from the 5-yard line and is successful. Team B is then on offense and can choose to either go for one point from the 5-yard line to tie and force a second round of overtime or to go for two points from the 10-yard line for the win.
 - b. If the second team on offense in an overtime round fails to beat or match the team that went first, the team that went first wins.
 5. If both teams score a touchdown, the overtime procedures will repeat.
- j. **Rushing the Quarterback**
 - i. All players that rush the passer must be a minimum of **7 yards** from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush the quarterback.
 - ii. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend the line of scrimmage.
 - iii. Once the ball has been handed off the 7-yard rule is no longer in effect and all defenders are eligible to rush.
 - iv. A special marker, or the referee, will designate 7 yards from the line of scrimmage.
 - v. The quarterback may only run the ball if he is rushed.
- k. **Running**
 - i. Only direct hands-off behind the line of scrimmage is legal. No laterals or pitches of any kind. Offense may use multiple hands-off.

- ii. "Center sneak" play is no longer allowed. The QB is not allowed to handoff to the center on the first handoff of the play
- iii. The player who takes the hand-off can throw the ball as long as they do not pass the line of scrimmage.
- iv. Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a defensive player.
- v. The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's belt is when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is. Ball & flags must break the plane for a 1st down and touchdown.
- vi. No-run Zones are located 5 yards before each end zone and 5 yards on either side of midfield are designed to avoid short-yardage power-running situations. Teams are not allowed to run in these zones if the subsequent line is LIVE. (Reminder: Each offensive team approaches only TWO no-run zones in each drive – one 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down and one 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD).

I. Passing

- i. All passes must be forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage.
- ii. Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
- iii. Quarterback has a 7 second "pass clock". If a pass is not thrown within the 7 seconds, play is dead, returns to line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off the 7-second rule is no longer in effect.
- iv. Interceptions change the possession of the ball at the point of interception. The ball comes out to the 5-yard line if the interception occurs in the end zone.

m. Receiving

- i. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the QB if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
- ii. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time.
- iii. Player must have at least one foot in bounds when making a catch.
- iv. Pass may not be intentionally tipped in any direction to another teammate.

n. Penalties

- i. 1. The referee will call all penalties.
- ii. 2. Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
- iii. 3. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted. (Spot fouls)
- iv. 4. Only the team captain or head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players may not question calls.
- v. Games or halves may not end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.
- vi. Penalties are assessed live ball then dead ball. Live ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered complete.
- vii. Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage more than half the distance to the goal.

ii. Defensive spot fouls

Defensive pass interference	Automatic first down
Holding	+5 yards and automatic first down
Stripping	+5 yards and automatic first down

iii. Offensive spot fouls

Screening or blocking	-5 yards and loss of down
Charging	-5 yards and loss of down
Flag guarding	-5 yards and loss of down

iv. Defensive penalties

Defensive unnecessary roughness	+10 yards and automatic first down
Defensive unsportsmanlike conduct	+10 yards and automatic first down
Offside / illegal substitution	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Illegal rush (Starting rush from inside 7-yard marker)	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Illegal flag pull (Before the receiver has the ball)	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Roughing the passer	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Taunting	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down

v. Offensive penalties

Offensive unnecessary roughness	-10 yards and loss of down
Offensive unsportsmanlike conduct	-10 yards and loss of down
Offside / false start / illegal substitution	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal forward pass <small>(Any pass received or lands behind the line of scrimmage or throwing a pass after crossing the line of scrimmage)</small>	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Offensive pass interference	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal motion <small>(More than one person moving)</small>	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Delay of game	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Impeding the rusher	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal Procedure	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down

7U and 9U Guidelines

I. 7U Guidelines

- a. 'No Run' zones are eliminated. Teams may run the ball anywhere on the field.
- b. Defenders may NOT rush the passer unless there is a legal handoff executed in the backfield.
- c. One Coach for each team is permitted on the field pre and post snap to help their players, but post snap at a safe distance to plays completion.
- d. If the ball falls to, or touches the ground during the initial center to quarterback exchange, the play is ruled a 'Do Over' with no loss of down, once per down. On a second consecutive occurrence, the down is consumed.
- e. Defenders MUST line up at least five yards from the line of scrimmage prior to the snap.

II. 9U Guidelines

- a. 'No Run' zones are eliminated at Mid-field. 5 Yard No-Run zone will still be in effect for the End Zones
- b. One Coach for each team is permitted on the field pre-snap to help their players, but MUST be off the field prior to the snap of the ball.

**PARENT/SPECTATOR, COACH and PLAYER CODE OF CONDUCT
Youth Flag Football**

It's simple: BE A GOOD SPORT!

Children's sports are supposed to be fun and for the children. Unfortunately, many parents, fans and coaches don't realize that their actions, whether verbal or nonverbal, can have a lasting emotional effect on children. Too many children are leaving sports activities because the fun is unfairly taken away by adults. The code of conduct for this league has been developed by National Youth Sports Safety Foundation (NYSSF) and Denton Parks and Recreation Department (DPARD).

Parents, fans and coaches who follow this simple code can help reinforce what sports are all about...
BEING FUN FOR EVERYONE!

1. Spectators must remain on the opposite side of the field from the score table, players and coaches.
2. Teams and spectators should demonstrate good sportsmanship! Players, coaches and spectator comments should not be derogatory or demeaning towards opposing teams/players/coaches.
3. Spectators or players are not permitted to approach the score table or referee at any time. Only the head or assistant coach has authority to speak with the score table or referee if there is a question regarding the awarding of a point.
4. Spectators and coaches will be a positive role model for children and encourage sportsmanship by showing respect and courtesy, and by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, spectators, officials, and staff at every game, practice or league event.
5. Spectators, coaches and players will not engage in any kind of unsportsmanlike conduct with any official, coach, player or spectator such as booing, taunting, refusing to shake hands, or using profane language or gestures.
6. Spectators, coaches and players will not encourage any behaviors or practices that would endanger the health and wellbeing of the athletes.
7. Spectators and coaches should praise their team members for competing fairly, trying hard, and make the children feel like a winner every time, regardless of the score!
8. The use of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol during youth sports is prohibited by City ordinance. Spectators, coaches and players will refrain from their use during all league activities.
9. No spitting is allowed. Spitting is a foul - the opposing team will be rewarded possession of the ball. First offense is a warning, second offense is a substitution, and the third offense is a suspension for the rest of the season.
10. Parents, remember that all coaches are volunteers! Respect the fact that they are willing to give so much of their time to your child.
11. Each team's coach is held responsible for the conduct of their fans/spectators/team participants.
12. If spectators, players, and/or coaches fail to abide by the code of conduct, they will be subject to disciplinary action as decided by the Denton Parks and Recreation Department. Disciplinary action could include, but is not limited to: verbal warnings, written warnings, ejections, and suspensions for various lengths.
13. Officials, score keepers, and DPARD staff have the authority to remove a player, coach, or spectator from a game and can declare the game a forfeit due to unsportsmanlike conduct.
14. Any player, coach, or spectator ejected from any league activity is suspended for a minimum of one (1) week from all DPARD league activities. The suspension could be longer depending on the severity of the infraction. Suspensions are not eligible for appeal.
15. Players, coaches, and spectators who have been ejected must leave the complex and may not return until the completion of their suspension.
16. No fighting is allowed. First offense is a suspension for the rest of the season, second offense results in one-year loss of eligibility in all league play or indefinite suspension if deemed severe.
17. If the referee or scorekeeper witnesses any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking, or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped, and the player can be ejected from the game. The Athletics office may decide to implement a suspension, depending on the severity of the infraction(s). **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.**
18. Suspensions carry over from season to season and are enforced for all DPARD leagues.

Denton Parks and Recreation Concussion Policy

PURPOSE

The following policy and procedures are being implemented by the Denton Parks and Recreation Department, with the intent to reduce the potentially serious health risks associated with sports related concussions and head injuries.

POLICY

It is policy of the Denton Parks and Recreation Department to educate coaches, referees, staff, parents, and participants of the signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with sports induced concussions. Participants suspected of a concussion or head injury, are required to be removed from the activity, must seek medical attention, and then follow the proper procedure for return to play. "When in doubt, sit them out!"

DEFINITION

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury that is caused by a blow to the head or body that jars or shakes the brain inside the skull. It is important to note that an athlete does not have to lose consciousness to have suffered a concussion. Symptoms include but are not limited to the following below.

SIGNS OBSERVED BY OTHERS

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment
- Forgets an instruction
- Persistent vomiting
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Increasing sleepiness
- Shows mood, behavior, personality changes
- Can't recall events prior to hit or fall

SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY ATHLETE

- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Just not "feeling right" or is "feeling down"

ROLE OF COACHES AND STAFF

Coaches and staff will NOT be expected, nor will they be trained to "diagnose" a concussion. Diagnosis is the job of a qualified health care provider. Coaches and staff are being asked to use their best judgment in observing the signs, symptoms, and behaviors associated with concussions. If coaches or staff observes questionable signs, symptoms, or behavior, he/she must remove the player from the sporting event for further evaluation and notify the player's parent/guardian and fill out the appropriate accident form. Coaches and staff are not permitted to allow a player to resume activity until the Denton Parks and Recreation receives a written statement from a qualified health care provider indicating that the player is cleared to resume participation in the sporting event.

ROLE OF OFFICIALS

Officials will NOT be expected to "diagnose" a concussion. Officials are being asked to use their best judgment in observing the signs, symptoms, and behaviors associated with concussions. Officials will not be asked to give what could be perceived as a medical opinion. If an official observes questionable, signs, symptoms, or behavior, the official should notify the appropriate staff and the player should be removed from the sporting event. Officials are not responsible for the sideline evaluation or management of the player after he/she is removed from play.

ROLE OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Like coaches, staff and officials, parents/guardians will NOT be expected to “diagnose” a concussion. However, parents/guardians are being asked to become familiar with the signs, symptoms, and behaviors associated with concussions. Parents/guardians will be expected to comply with this Policy and support the determination made by staff to remove a player from a sporting event.

It is the parent/guardian’s obligation to have the player evaluated by a qualified health care provider and to obtain from that provider a written statement that clears the player to resume participation in the sporting event.

MANDATED COURSE OF ACTION

1. Remove player from the sporting event.
2. Notify parent/guardian.
3. Any player suspected of having a concussion should be evaluated by a qualified health care provider as soon as practicable.
4. Before a player will be allowed to resume participation in a sporting event, the parent/guardian of the player must obtain a written statement from a qualified health provider and return to the Denton Parks and Recreation Department indicating that the player is cleared to resume participation in the sporting event.

The signs, symptoms and behaviors associated with a concussion are not always apparent immediately after a bump, blow or jolt to the head or body and may develop over a few hours or longer. An athlete should be closely watched following a suspected concussion and should never be left alone.

Athletes should never try to “tough out” a concussion. Teammates, parents/guardians and coaches should never encourage an athlete to “play through” the symptoms of a concussion. In addition, there should never be an attribution of bravery or courage to athletes who play despite having concussion signs and/or symptoms. The risks of such behavior must be emphasized to all members of the team, as well as coaches and parents.

If an athlete returns to activity before being fully healed from an initial concussion, the athlete is at greater risk for a repeat concussion. A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain has a chance to recover from the first can slow recovery or increase the chance for long-term problems. In rare cases, a repeat concussion can result in severe swelling and bleeding in the brain that can be fatal.

Return to Play

After suffering a concussion, no athlete should return to play or practice on that same day. An athlete should never be allowed to resume play following a concussion until symptom free and given the approval to resume physical activity by an appropriate health-care professional. Documentation must be provided to the Denton Parks and Recreation athletic supervisor.

Once an athlete no longer has signs or symptoms of a concussion and is cleared to return to activity by an appropriate health-care professional, he/she should proceed in a step-wise fashion to allow the brain to re-adjust to exercise. In most cases, the athlete should progress no more than one step each day, and at times each step may take more than one day.

If symptoms of a concussion recur, or if concussion signs and/or behaviors are observed at any time during the return-to-activity program, the athlete must discontinue all activity immediately. Depending on previous instructions, the athlete may need to be re-evaluated by the health-care provider.