

# **City of Fort Collins Youth Flag Football Rules**

Anything not covered in this rules document will default to the NFL Flag Rules Book.

Updated June 2022. Rules changes will appear in *highlighted italics font*.

**5 on 5 Flag Football Overview:** As you begin practicing with your flag team, tell them this: During training camp, NFL and college teams do just what your team is doing – passing and catching with no tackling. This is the way the pros practice and learn. Flag football is the real thing. Flag is similar to what you play in the park and what the pros play on TV. There are downs, yardage, set plays, and, instead of ball-stopping tackles, flags to pull. Players will begin to learn the positions of football and their respective responsibilities, especially those involved in the passing game.

While it is natural that the better athletes will assume dominant roles in flag, make every attempt to share responsibilities. Let several players try playing quarterback. Let different players try running the ball and defending the pass. Their knowledge and experience of the different positions will make them better all-around players.

Among skills, passing and catching are, of course, key. Running with the ball is also something to work on. Drills in practice can help players get used to pulling flags, and to making defenders avoid flags. (See the following rules for details on some limits to flag activity.) On defense, show players both zone and man-to-man types of defense. Try them both in our games so players can experience these styles for themselves. Flag can be as simple or as complicated as you want to make it. Let the skill level of your players be your guide. See the rules that follow for more information on how to play flag football.

## **1. The Game: Basics:**

- a. A coin toss determines first possession. Team that wins toss chooses.
- b. All blocking is screen blocking and must take place without contact. Screening principles in basketball will apply to screen blocking. No moving screen blocks are allowed.
- c. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has 4 downs to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has 4 downs to score a touchdown. If the offense declares a punt on 4<sup>th</sup> down, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on its own 5-yard line.
- d. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield or score on 4<sup>th</sup> down, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from that spot. Exception: Any 4<sup>th</sup> down play inside the 5 yard line will be spotted at the 5 yard line.
- e. Teams change sides after 18 minutes (1<sup>st</sup> half). The team who did not have the first possession first in the first half will have possession of the ball the second half.
- f. Players are asked to wear a different color flag from their shorts.

## **2. Players:** Teams must field a minimum of five players at all times.

## **3. Timing / Overtime:**

- a. Games are played 36 minutes running time. Two 18 minute halves.
- b. If the score is tied at the end of the game, the game will result in a tie.
- c. Each time the ball is spotted a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.
- d. Each team has two 30 second time outs per half.

- e. Officials can stop the clock on their own discretion.
  - f. Half time will be 2 minutes.
4. **Scoring:**
- a. *Touchdown:* 6 points.
  - b. *Extra point:*
    - i. 1 point (played from the 5-yard line pass only).
    - ii. 2 points (played from the 12-yard line run or pass).
  - c. *Safety:* 2 points.
5. **No Running Zones:** In the no run zone, the center must give a direct snap to the quarterback, and there must be a direct pass beyond the line of scrimmage to advance the ball.
- a. “No Running Zones,” located 5 yards from each end zone and 5 yards on either side of midfield, are designed to avoid short-yardage, power running situations.
  - b. All plays from within the no running zone must be a direct pass to advance the ball. No direct hand-offs, pitches, lateral or backward passes are allowed in the no running zone.
6. **Running:**
- a. The quarterback cannot run the ball.
  - b. Direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Offense may use multiple handoffs.
  - c. Only 1 pitch, lateral or backward pass is allowed behind the line of scrimmage. Note: any pitch, lateral or backward pass that hits the ground will be spotted where it hits the ground.
  - d. Once the ball has been handed off, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
  - e. Spinning is allowed, but players cannot dive with the football or hurdle (jump over) opposing players.
  - f. The ball is spotted where the ball is when the flag is pulled.
  - g. In order for a snapper (center) to receive a handoff, they must turn 180 degree and face their own end zone before the quarterback can hand them the ball.
  - h. The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage, provided the hand-off occurred outside the “no running zone”.
7. **Passing/Receiving:**
- a. All players are eligible to receive passes including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage.
  - b. Shovel passes (direct pass in front of the quarterback) are allowed.
  - c. Forward passes do not have to cross the line of scrimmage.
8. **Dead Balls:**
- a. Balls must be snapped between the legs, not off to the side, to start the play.
  - b. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
  - c. Play is ruled “dead” when:
    - i. Ball carrier’s flag is pulled.
    - ii. Ball carrier steps out of bounds.
    - iii. Touchdown or safety is scored.
    - iv. Ball carrier’s knee hits the ground.
    - v. Ball carrier’s flag falls off.

- vi. Ball hits the ground on a fumble. Note: There are no fumbles (players cannot recover the ball if dropped); when a ball hit the ground on a fumble, the ball is spotted where hits the ground.

**9. Interceptions:**

- a. The defensive team, following an interception may make a return.
- b. An interception during an attempted extra point is a dead ball.

**10. Rushing the Quarterback:**

- 11. All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of 7 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any players who cross the rush line before the ball is snapped is considered offsides.
- 12. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage.
- 13. Once the ball is handed off, the 7-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 7 yards from the line of scrimmage.
- 14. K-1 grade flag football: No rushing by the defensive team is allowed. The quarterback has 7 seconds to release the ball. The referee will make the 7 second count.

**15. Sportsmanship / Roughing:**

- a. If the field supervisor or referee witnesses any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking, or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game. *Foul play will not be tolerated.*

**16. Penalties:**

**a. Defense:**

- i. Offside – 5 yards and automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down.
- ii. Interference – 10 yards automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down.
- iii. Illegal contact (holding, blocking, contact on the ball carrier, etc.) – 10 yards automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down.
- iv. Illegal flag pull (before receiver has the ball) – 10 yards from the spot of the foul, automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down.
- v. Illegal rushing (starting rush from inside 7 yard marker) – 5 yards automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down.

**b. Offense:**

- i. Illegal motion (more than one person moving, false start, etc.) – 5 yards loss of down.
- ii. Illegal forward pass (forward pass attempted behind the line of scrimmage) – 5 yards loss of down.
- iii. Offensive pass interference (illegal pick play, pushing off / away defender) – 10 yards loss of down.
- iv. Delay of game – 5 yards loss of down (clock stops until next snap in 2<sup>nd</sup> half)
- v. Flag guarding – 10 yards from spot of the foul and loss of down, this includes tying the flag.
- vi. Illegal screen block – 10 yards from the spot of the foul and loss of down.
- vii. Illegal Pitch – (more than 1 pitch, lateral or backward pass per play) – 5 yards loss of down.

**17. Other Regulations:**

- a. Referees determine incidental contact which may result from normal run of play.

- b. Only the team captain may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players cannot question judgment calls.
  - c. Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.
  - d. *Remember:* Each time the ball is spotted a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball.
18. **Attire:**
- a. Cleats are allowed, except for metal spikes. .
  - b. Players may wear a protective mouthpiece; they are not required.
  - c. Official City of Fort Collins issued jersey must be worn during play.
  - d. Players should wear athletic attire (i.e. athletic shorts or sweat pants).
19. **Coaching:** Coaches are encouraged to call plays from the sideline when possible.
20. **Mercy Rule:** At any time, the point differential is 25 or more the team winning can no longer rush the quarterback. If the point differential drops below 25 the winning team can rush.
21. **Tournaments:** are only played in the middle school divisions of all leagues, except for the bowl games in tackle football.

## Grade Specific Modifications

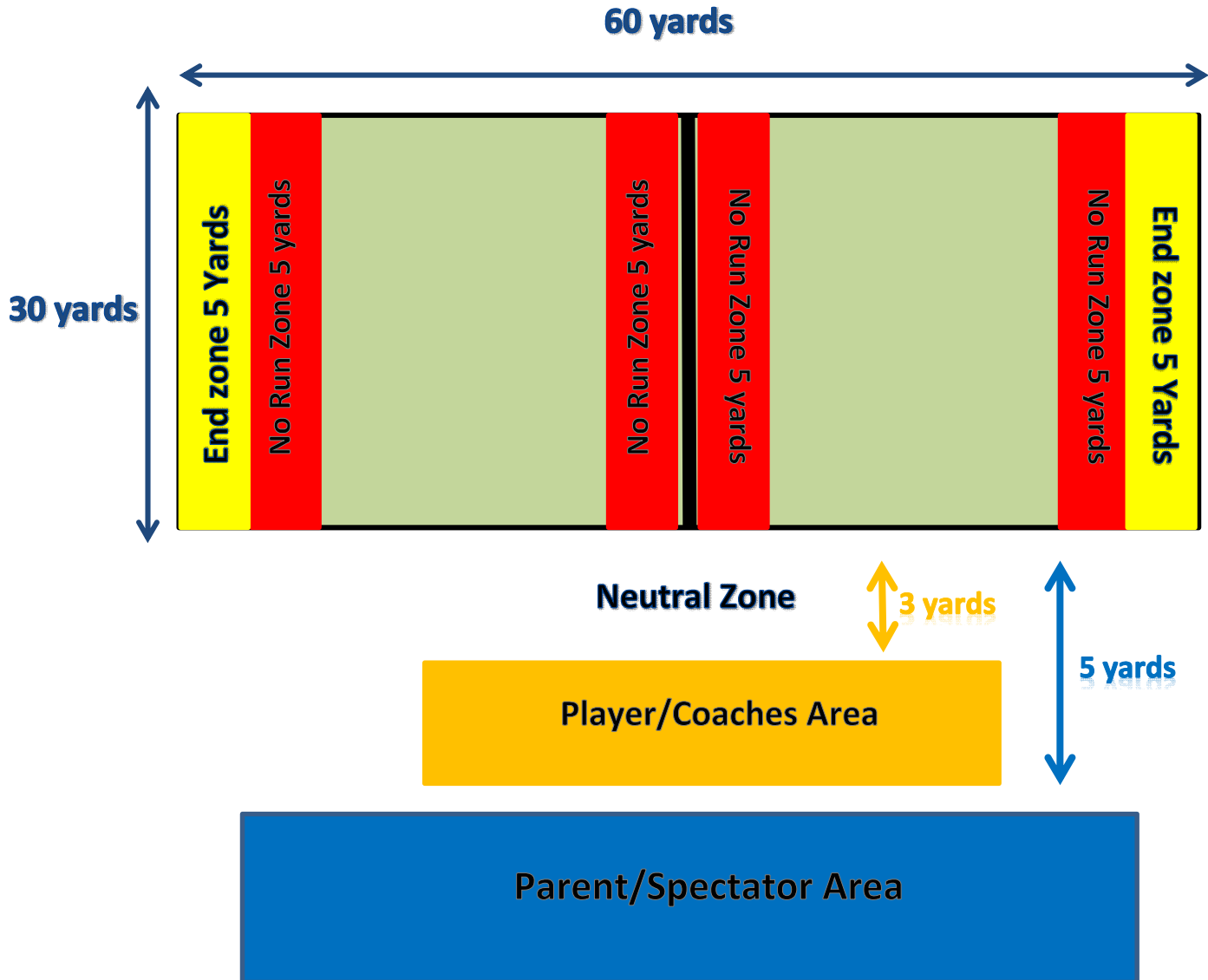
### Grades K-3

- 1. **Coaches:** One coach is allowed in the huddle with the offensive team.\
- 2. **Football:** Pee Wee Size

### Grades 4<sup>th</sup> -8<sup>th</sup>

- 1. **Coaches:** The coaches must call plays from the sideline; defensive coaches must be on the sideline at the snap of the ball.
- 2. **Football Size:**
  - a. 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>: TDJ
  - b. 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>: TDY

# Flag Football Field



1. The Field is 60 yards long and 30yards wide
2. Each of the end zones is 5 yards in length and 30 yards in with.
3. There are four “No Running Zones”, one before each end zone and one on either side of the midfield line; each no running zone is 5 yards in length.
4. Five yards off of the sideline is where the player and coaches area begins. The space in between is to remain clear as the neutral zone.
5. Five yards off of the sideline and behind the player/coaches area is where the parent/spectator area begins.