



YOUTH FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

(Revised 3/12/26)



Winfield Recreation Commission

Youth Flag Football Rules

GENERAL RULES

1. **Philosophy:** The goal of this program is to introduce youth to the game of flag football. The focus should be on the individual development, fundamentals, and having fun. Good sportsmanship is always expected from players, coaches, and parents.
2. **Practices:** Once teams have been formed, a team may meet no more than three times a week and no longer than an hour and a half per meeting (Including games)
3. **Inclement Weather:** For postponements due to inclement weather, look for us on Facebook for updates or by text from Textcaster. Make-up games will be scheduled as soon as possible with a memo passed out to the head coach. Games could include playing during another day of the week and not necessarily on the regular game day. Schedules will be updated on www.winfieldrec.com.
4. **Assigned Players:** Once a team is established, each player assigned will remain on that team. No player may switch teams under any circumstances except when approved by the Sports Director.

2. EQUIPMENT

1. **Ball Size:** The 1st- 2nd & 3rd-4th grade leagues will use a Pee Wee Size ball.
The 5th-6th grade leagues will use a Junior Size ball.
2. **Player Equipment:** No hard or sharp objects may be worn including, but not limited to: face masks, metal cleats, steel plated shoes, jewelry, or large metal buckles. Clothing or objects which could confuse opposing players are prohibited. Bandannas or hats are also prohibited.
3. **Legal Equipment:** Tennis shoes or rubber spiked cleats, knee or elbow pads.
4. **Recommended Equipment:** It is required by the WRC that each player has a mouthpiece.

3. GAME PLAY

1. At the start of the game, head coaches from both teams will meet at midfield (40 yd line) for the coaches meeting. This meeting is for a brief rule clarification and rule updates from the referee in charge. The home team listed on the schedule will report if they want to start with the ball or defer to the second half.
2. Starting at the 40-yd. line, the offense takes possession and has 4 downs to cross midfield (20 yd. line) for a 1st down. No kickoffs.
3. The ball must be snapped between the legs.
4. Once a team crosses midfield, it has 4 downs to score a touchdown.
5. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield or score, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts at the 40-yd. line.
6. All possession changes will start at the 40-yard line.

4. ROSTERS

This is a 7 vs 7 flag football league that is modified from traditional tackle football while retaining the same basics and skills. Teams must field a minimum of 5 players to play a game.

5. SUBSTITUTIONS

Playing Time: All team members who are present for a game must have a starting position on offense or defense. Players should have the opportunity to play both offense and defense. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.

6. FIELD

The field dimensions are 40 yards long by 35 yards wide with one end zone and one mid-field line for a first down.

7. COACHES

1. Coaches are allowed on the field to direct players according to division.
 - a) 1st-2nd & 3rd-4th grade leagues: two coaches are allowed on the field.
 - b) 5th-6th grade league: one coach is allowed on the field.
2. A team is limited to three (3) coaches or adult supervisors during a ball game.
3. **Sideline Boxes:** Team members & coaches not in the game must remain on their sideline.

8. SPORTSMANSHIP / UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

If the Sports Director or official witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, illegal blocking such as chop blocking or ANY conduct they determine to be an unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the offending player, coach and/or fan may be ejected from the game and, potentially, the field/premises. The decision is made at the referee's discretion. No appeals will be considered. **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!**

9. TIMING AND OVERTIME

1. Games are a total of 40 minutes, played with two 20-minute running halves.
2. Clock stops only for time outs and injuries.
3. There is a 3-minute break at halftime.
4. Each team receives two 60 second timeouts per game.
5. A team has 40 seconds to snap the ball after it has been spotted by a referee.

Penalty: Delay of game penalty.
6. If a game is within 8 points in the final 2 minutes of play, the clock will stop for penalties, incompletions, when a ball carrier steps out of bounds and for a change of possession.

Overtime

If the score is tied at the end of 40 minutes, teams move directly into overtime. The following tie breaker system will be used for all overtime games: The visiting team listed on the schedule will report if they want to start with the ball or defer to play defense first. The ball is placed at the 20-yard line. After 4 plays, the referee will mark where the ball ended up with a cone on the sideline. Opposing team will now take over at 20-yard line and run 4 plays going the same direction. Whichever team gains the most yards on 4 plays wins. If both teams are still tied, the above scenario is repeated until there is a winner.

10.DEAD BALL

Play is ruled "dead" when:

1. The ball hits the ground
 - a) There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's feet were at the time of the fumble. No stripping of the ball is allowed.
 - b) If the ball hits the ground as a result of a poor snap, the ball is then placed where the ball hit the ground.
2. The ball carrier's:
 - a) flag is pulled
 - b) steps out of bounds
 - c) knees or arm touch the ground
 - d) flag falls out when a defender is within pulling distance
 - e) flags are not positioned at the hips
3. A touchdown or PAT is scored
4. An interception is made
5. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one or no flags
6. Inadvertent whistle

11.SCORING

1. Touchdown: 6 points
2. PAT (point after touchdown)
 - a) 1-point play from 5-yard line (Pass Only)
 - b) 2-point play from 10-yard line (Run or Pass)
3. Blowout Rule: If a team is leading by 40 points at anytime during the game, the scorekeeper will keep track of the score on the scoresheet only and quit putting the score on the scoreboard. If a team is leading by 40 points, the clock will continue to run, except for timeouts and injuries.

12.PASSING

1. Pass ONLY zones are in effect 5 yards before both the mid-field line and end zone to prevent teams from conducting power run plays which increases the odds for contact/injury. All plays must be forward pass plays beyond the line of scrimmage anytime the ball is marked within this area of the field. (Exception 1st-2nd grade)
2. All passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage.
3. Any forward pass overhand or underhand will be considered an incomplete pass if dropped and returned to the line of scrimmage.
4. Any backwards pass overhand or underhand will be considered a fumble and spotted at the feet of the receiver.

13.RECEIVING

1. All players are eligible to receive passes, including the quarterback if the ball was handed off before the line of scrimmage.
2. A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception and can have no body part touching out of bounds prior to completing the reception.
3. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. All motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage.
4. Interceptions change the possession of the ball with the ball starting back at the 40-yard line.

14.RUSHING

1. The ball is spotted where the ball is when the flag is pulled.
2. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball across the LOS. The quarterback is the offensive player who receives the snap under center or in shotgun formation.
3. Direct handoffs, laterals, and pitches are permitted behind the LOS only. The offense may use multiple handoffs.
4. "Center sneak" play is not allowed. The QB is not allowed to handoff to the center on the first handoff of the play.
5. 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. (Exception: 1st-2nd grade)
6. Any player who receives a handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
7. Once the ball has been handed off, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
8. Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding.
9. Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a flag pull. Players spinning out of control will be called for flag guarding.
10. Runners may leave their feet if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid collision with another player without a flag guarding penalty enforced.
11. Flag obstruction – All shirts MUST be tucked in before play begins. The flags must be on the player's hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.
12. Once the ball is advanced beyond the LOS, the current ball carrier is the only player allowed to have possession of the ball until the play is blown dead.
13. No blocking or "screening" is allowed at any time.

15.RUSHING THE PASSER

1. All players who rush the QB must be a minimum of 7 yards from the line of scrimmage (as marked by ref) when the ball is snapped.
2. Up to 2 players can rush the QB.
3. Players not rushing the QB may defend on the line of scrimmage but cannot cross over that line until the ball leaves the QB's hands.
4. Once the ball leaves the QB's hands, the 7-yard rule is no longer in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
5. The referee will designate 7 yards from the line of scrimmage.
6. Teams are not required to identify their rusher before the play.
7. 1st-2nd grade league defenders may NOT rush the passer, unless a legal handoff is made in backfield.
8. Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however, NO contact can be made with the quarterback in any way. Blocking the pass or attempting to block the pass and then making contact with the passer will result in a roughing the passer penalty.
9. The offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has the right to a clear path to the quarterback, regardless of where they line up prior to the snap. If the "path or line" is occupied by a moving offensive player, then it is the offense's responsibility to avoid the rusher. Any disruption to the rusher's path and/or contact will result in an impeding the rusher penalty. If the offensive player does not move after the snap, then it is the rusher's responsibility to go around the offensive player and to avoid contact.
10. A sack occurs if the quarterback's flags are pulled behind the LOS. The ball will be spotted where possession of the ball is when the flag is pulled.

16.FLAg PULLING

1. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball-carrier is in full possession of the ball.
2. Defenders can dive to pull flags but cannot tackle, hold or run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.
3. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball-carrier's possession at any time.
4. If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during the play when a defender is within pulling distance, the player is down immediately upon possession of the ball and the play ends. The ball is placed where the flag lands.
5. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags of a player off who is not in possession of the ball.
6. Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball-carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the head, hand, arm or shoulder or intentionally covering the flags with the football shirts

17.FORMATIONS

1. Offenses must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage (the center) and the quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.
2. One player at a time may go in motion 1-yard behind and parallel to the line of scrimmage. No motion is allowed toward the line of scrimmage.
3. Movement by a player who is set or a player who runs toward the line of scrimmage while in motion is considered a false start.
4. The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between his/her legs to a player in the backfield, and the ball must completely leave his/her hands.

18.OFFICIALS

1. **Officials:** There will be a minimum of two officials on each field; one referee and one umpire. If numbers allow, three officials are desirable. The referee (White Hat) shall be in charge of the field on which he/she is working. The remaining officials shall be subordinate to him/her.
2. The referee shall deliver all warnings, all ejection of players and coaches, and confer with the Field Supervisor or Sports Director on any problems and decisions. If another official believes it's necessary to warn or eject a coach or player, he/she will confer with the referee who will make the decision.
3. **Linesman:** The linesman shall be responsible for control of the first down markers during the game. This also means that he/she will brief the scorekeepers of their responsibilities and duties while running the markers.
4. **Protests:** Protests will not be allowed except concerning player eligibility. Questions about rule interpretations or judgement calls must be settled at the time they are brought to the referee's attention. The referee's decision will be final.

DEFENSIVE PENALTIES

Defensive Pass Interference	Automatic first down from the spot of the foul
Holding/Illegal Contact	+5 Yards and Automatic first down
Illegal Flag Pull (Before receiver has the ball)	+5 Yards from LOS and automatic first down
Illegal Rushing (leaving early from 7 yd rush mark)	+5 Yards, Repeat Down
Offsides	+5 Yards, Repeat Down
Running into QB	+5 Yards from LOS and automatic first down
Stripping the ball	+5 Yards and automatic first down
Unnecessary roughness	+10 Yards and automatic first down
Unsportsmanlike Conduct (roughing the passer, taunting...at discretion of the referee)	+10 Yards from spot of foul unless behind LOS and automatic first down/possible ejection

OFFENSIVE PENALTIES

Offensive Penalties when the ball is spotted at the 40 Yard Line will result in a loss of down.	
Charging: (not making an attempt to avoid defender/making contact)	-5 Yards from the spot of the foul, loss of down
Delay of Game	Clock Stops, -5 yards and loss of down
Offsides/False start	-5 Yards, repeat down
Flag Guarding: including stiff arm	-5 Yards from the spot of the foul, loss of down
Holding/Illegal Contact, impeding the rusher	-5 Yards, repeat down
Illegal Forward Pass: (beyond LOS)	-5 Yards, loss of down
Illegal Motion (False start, more than one player in motion)	-5 Yards, repeat down
Offensive Pass Interference (Illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender)	-5 Yards, repeat down
Impeding the rusher	-5 Yards, loss of down
QB Running with the ball	-10 Yards, loss of down
Unnecessary Roughness	-10 Yards, and loss of down
Unsportsmanlike Conduct: at discretion of the referee	-10 Yards from LOS, loss of down, possible ejection.

19. PENALTIES

PENALTIES (ALL PENALTIES CAN BE DECLINED)

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

20. UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT (Continued)

1. Winfield Recreation Commission sponsored leagues are designed solely for the recreational values derived by the players, managers, coaches and spectators from the sport in which they participate. Any player, team, manager, coach or spectator who displays any form of unsportsmanlike conduct such as flagrant rule violation, vulgar language, engaging in fighting or obviously attempting to injure anyone, threatening or purposely touching a league official before, during or after a game may be suspended from the league and/or all leagues sponsored by the Recreation Commission. In addition, the team may be placed on probation. FEES WILL NOT BE REFUNDED.
2. Any person(s) ejected from the game shall leave the facility immediately, NO SIGHT/NO SOUND. Failure to do so will warrant a forfeiture of the game by the offending team. The coach or manager shall be responsible for actions by his/her players and spectators and for informing them of all rules. Badgering or taunting the opponents, officials or spectators is strictly prohibited and is grounds for suspension. When a player, manager or coach is ejected he/she is automatically suspended for the next game. A second ejection within the same season will result in removal from the rest of the current season.
3. SPECIAL EMPHASIS WILL BE PLACED ON MISCONDUCT AND PROFANE LANGUAGE. OFFICIALS WILL BE INSTRUCTED TO ENFORCE THIS RULE AND ANY VIOLATIONS BY PLAYERS OR COACHES WILL RESULT IN AN AUTOMATIC EJECTION AND ONE GAME SUSPENSION.

21. CONCUSSION POLICY

If any player is showing any signs of head trauma or symptoms of concussion, that player must set out the remainder of the game and be checked out and cleared by a medical professional before returning to games or practices. A formal release from a medical professional must be turned into the WRC office before player is allowed to participate. Signs may be but not limited to: Drowsiness, nausea and vomiting, convulsions or seizures, increased confusion, restlessness or agitation, one pupil larger than the other, loss of consciousness, slurred speech, worsening headache or unusual behavior.

Terminology

Boundary Lines	The outer lines marking the playing field's perimeter, including sidelines and end zones.
Line of Scrimmage	(LOS) an imaginary line running through the point of the football and across the width of the field.
Line-to-Gain	The yard line the offense must reach for a first down.
Rush Line	An imaginary line 7 yards from the line of scrimmage on the defense's side.
Offense	The team with possession of the ball.
Defense	The team trying to stop the offense and regain possession.
Passer	Any offensive player who throws the ball, not just the quarterback.
Rusher	The defensive player who starts from the rush line and tries to pressure the quarterback by either pulling flags or blocking passes.
Live Ball	Refers to the period of time that the play is in action. Generally used in regard to penalties. Live ball penalties are considered part of the play and must be enforced before the down is considered complete.
Dead Ball	The time between plays when no action is occurring.
Whistle	Official's signal to stop play for timeouts, end of plays, or game periods.
Inadvertent Whistle	An official's whistle that is sounded in error.
Charging	When a ball-carrier illegally runs directly into a set defensive player. This includes leading with the head or making contact with shoulder, forearm, or chest.
Flag Guarding	An illegal act when the ball-carrier tries to block defenders from pulling their flags - whether by stiff-arming, dropping their elbow/head, or using the ball itself as a shield.
Shovel Pass	A legal forward pass across the LOS (Underhand, backhand or by pushing the ball forward).
Lateral	A backward or parallel toss of the ball by the ball-carrier.
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	Confrontational or offensive behavior or language.