

Kearney Parks and Recreation

Youth Flag Football Rules and Regulations

The City of Kearney offers non-sanctioned flag football leagues for the recreational enjoyment of all participants and spectators. It is our goal to provide a positive experience for the community that we serve to create community connections and build the citizen of tomorrow through our programming. If at any point you have any constructive feedback regarding this program offering, please feel free to contact the League Director. Thank you for choosing the City of Kearney for your recreational needs!

Divisions

Players will be placed on a team using a random draw generated by a computer. Siblings can be placed on the same team by request. No other exceptions will be made. All divisions are coed. We feature 5-6U, 8U, 10U, and 12U divisions at this time.

Rosters/Playing Time

1. Teams must consist of at least five players, with a maximum of twelve players.
 2. Games will be played 7 on 7, and a minimum of four (4) players must be on the field for each team at all times.
 3. A player may only appear on one roster.
 4. If a player is found playing on a team illegally, disciplinary action will be taken against the player, as well as the coach.
- All children should receive equal playing time for both offense and defense in each game they participate in.
 - Coaches are asked to monitor each other and report and infractions that they see.
 - If a coach is caught not evenly rotating his/her players, disciplinary action will be taken.

Player Equipment

1. Players must wear the official jersey provided by the league for games. If a player arrives at the game without his/her jersey, he/she may not be permitted to play.
2. Players are required to wear protective mouthpieces at all times during games.
3. Football cleats are encouraged; however cleats with exposed metal are not allowed.
4. No jewelry is permitted during the games
5. Shorts and pants cannot have open pockets.

Team Equipment

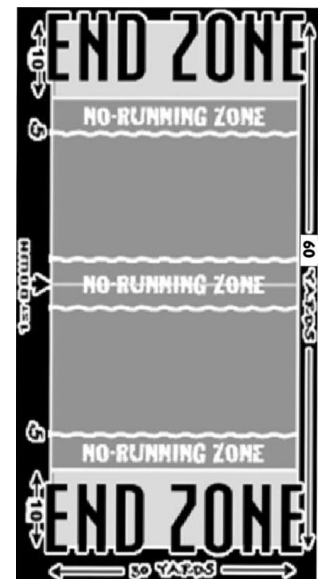
1. The league will provide each team with its jerseys, flags, mouth pieces, and footballs. These footballs are the mandatory game balls used for all divisions. No other footballs are permitted during game play.
2. At the end of the season, each team must return their footballs and flag belts to the league director.
3. Coaches are responsible for having a rulebook and schedule.

Ball Sizes

- 6U & 8U: Pee-Wee
- 10-12U: Junior

Field

1. The field dimensions are 30 yards by 60 yards, including two 10-yard end zones, and a midfield line-to-gain by 5 yards.
2. No-Run Zones are in place to prevent teams from conducting power run plays. While in the No-Run Zones (a 5 yard imaginary zone before midfield and before the end zone), teams cannot run the ball in any fashion. All plays must be pass plays, even with a handoff.
3. Stepping the boundary line is considered out of bounds.
4. Each offensive squad approaches only TWO No-Run Zones in each drive (one zone 5 yards from the midfield to gain the first down, and one zone 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD).
5. A 5 yard buffer zone is in place during all games. This buffer zone completely surrounds the playing field. Only coaches, players, and league personnel are allowed within this zone during the game. Coaches are asked to assist us with the enforcement of this rule.



Game

1. At the start of each game, captains from both teams shall meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who shall start with the ball. The visiting team shall call the toss.
2. The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense. The loser of the coin toss has the choice of direction. Teams may not choose to defer to the second half.
3. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has (3) plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, they have three (3) plays to score a touchdown.
4. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts its drive on its own 5-yard line.
5. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive on its own 5-yard line.
6. All possessions changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yard line.
7. Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.

Terminology

Boundary Lines	the outer perimeter lines around the field. They include the sidelines and back of the end zone lines.
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 line the offense must pass to get a first down or score.
Rush Line	an imaginary line running across the width of the field 7 yards (into the defensive side) from the line of scrimmage.
Offense	the squad with possession of the ball.
Defense	the squad opposing the offense to prevent them from advancing the ball.
Passer	the offensive player that throws the ball and may or may not be the quarterback.
Rusher	the defensive player assigned to rush the quarterback to prevent him/her from passing the ball by pulling his/her flags or by blocking the pass.
Downs (1-2-3)	the offensive squad has three attempts or “downs” to advance the ball. They must cross the line-to-gain to get another set of downs or to score.
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	refers to the period of time immediately before or after a play.
Whistle	sound made by an official using a whistle that signifies the end of the play or a stop in the action for a timeout, half time or the end of the game.
Inadvertent Whistle	official’s whistle that is performed in error.
Charging	the movement of the ball carrier directly at a defensive player who has established position on the field. This includes lowering the head, making contact with the defender with a shoulder, forearm, or the chest.
Flag Guarding	an act by the ball carrier to prevent a defender from pulling the ball carrier’s flags by stiff arm, lowering elbow or head, or by blocking access to the runner’s flags with a hand or arm.
Shovel Pass	a legal pass attempted beyond the line of scrimmage by throwing the ball underhand or pushing it towards a receiver in a shot put type manner.
Lateral	a backwards or sideways toss of the ball by the ball carrier.
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	a rude, confrontational, or offensive behavior or language.

Timing and Overtime

1. Games consist of two 20-minute halves with a five-minute halftime.
2. A continuous clock will be used except for the last one (1) minute of each half. Then the clock will be stopped on all dead ball situations.
3. Each team is allowed one 60-second timeout per half. Timeouts do not carry over into the second half.
4. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.

Overtime

1. There is no overtime in recreational play.

Forfeits

1. In order to keep games on time, teams arriving more than ten minutes later than their originally scheduled start time will forfeit the game.
2. Teams are required to have a minimum of four players to play a game.

Coaches

1. Coaches are required to wear the coach's shirt provided for the current season of play. Without this shirt, coaches are not permitted on the field.
2. Each team is responsible for cleaning up the field and sidelines after the game.

Scoring

1. Touchdown = 6 Points
2. PAT (Point After Touchdown) = 1 Point
 - a. Will be played from seven (7) yards out
3. Safety = 2 Points
 - a. A Safety occurs when the ball carrier is declared down in his/her own end zone. Safety also occurs when there is an offensive penalty in the end zone.
 - b. The team that scored will then receive the ball on their 5-yard line.

Live Ball/Dead Ball

1. The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.
2. The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage. It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on defense or offense enters the neutral zone. In regard to the neutral zone, the official may give both teams a "courtesy" neutral zone notification to allow their players to move back behind the line of scrimmage.
3. A player who gains possession in the air is considered in bounds as long as one foot comes down in the field of play.
4. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
5. Any official can whistle the play dead.
6. Play is ruled "dead" when:
 - a. The ball hits the ground.
 - b. The ball carrier's flag is pulled.
 - c. The ball carrier steps out of bounds.
 - d. A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored.
 - e. The ball carrier's knee or arm hits the ground.
 - f. The ball carrier's flag falls out.
 - g. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one or no flag(s).
 - h. The 7 second pass clock expires.
 - i. Inadvertent whistle.
7. NOTE: There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's feet were at the time of the fumble.
8. In case of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has two options:
 - a. Take the ball where it was when the whistle blew and the down is consumed.
 - b. Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.

Running

1. The ball is spotted where the runner's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball carrier has the ball. Forward progress will be measured by the player's front foot.
2. Direct handoffs, laterals, or pitches (player to player, hand to hand) behind the line of scrimmage are legal. Anyone behind the line of scrimmage can receive a handoff, lateral, or pitch.
3. There is no limit to the amount of direct handoffs, laterals, or pitches that can be performed by the offense in a single play, so long as the ball never crosses the line of scrimmage.
4. **The QB can run the ball beyond the line of scrimmage only if he/she has first handed the ball off behind the line of scrimmage and then taken a direct handoff, lateral, or pitch back from another player before the ball has ever crossed the line of scrimmage.**
5. The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball, as long as he or she does not pass the line of scrimmage.
6. It is the responsibility of the ball carrier to avoid colliding with defenders that lie in his/her path. Unintentional contact will not be penalized, provided the ball carrier makes an effort to avoid it. Failure to attempt to avoid contact with a defender (charging) may be penalized. Intentional contact will not be tolerated, and may result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty, and/or player ejection.

7. "No-Run Zones," located 5 yards before each end zone and 5 yards on either side of midfield are designed to avoid short short-yardage power-running situations. Teams are not allowed to run in these zones if the subsequent line is LIVE.
8. Once the ball has been handed off in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
9. Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping, or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding.
10. Spinning is permitted.
11. 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.

Passing

1. All passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage.
2. Shovel passes are allowed.
3. The quarterback has a seven-second "pass clock." If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, play is dead, the down is consumed and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off, the 7-second rule no longer is in effect.
 - a. If the QB is standing in the end zone at the end of the 7-second clock, the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage (LOS).

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. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. All motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted towards the line of scrimmage.
3. A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.
4. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
5. **Interceptions change the possession of the ball, and may be advanced by the defense in an attempt to score. Interceptions that are downed (or intercepting player flag pulled) in the endzone will have the ball placed at the 5 -yard Line.**

Rushing the Passer

1. **Defensive Players may enter the offensive backfield only after the football has left the quarterback's hands (this can be due to a pass or hand off). The intent of this league is to develop player skills, not just reward the fast rushers.**
2. Once the ball has left the QB's hands (pass or hand off), the above rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
3. The 7-second QB "pass clock" rule remains in effect.

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 carrier's possession at any time.
4. If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during the play, the player is down immediately upon possession of the ball and the play ends.
5. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player 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 jersey.

Formations

1. Offense must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage and up to four players on the line of scrimmage. The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.
 - a. One player at a time may go in motion 1-yard behind and parallel to the line of scrimmage.
 - b. No motion is allowed toward the line of scrimmage.
2. Offensive players must come to a complete stop for one second before the ball is snapped unless he/she is the only player in motion.
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. Shotgun snaps are allowed. If unable to snap between his/her legs, the player is permitted to hike the ball backwards from the side.
5. Each time the ball is spotted, a team has thirty (30) seconds to snap the ball. Each team will receive one (1) warning per game before a Delay of Game penalty is called.
6. **All blocking must be “shield blocking” only, with hands and arms at the side or behind the back. The blockers hands must remain below their waist and next to their body. Defensive players must go around the offensive player’s screen block. Use of arms and hands to contact and defeat block is illegal. There is no “down field blocking,” only shield blocking on the line of scrimmage is allowed. Shield Blockers are allowed to move laterally, but the spirit of the rule is to avoid contact when possible.**

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

1. If the field monitor or referee witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the referee’s discretion. No appeals will be considered. FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!
2. Offensive or confrontational language is illegal. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.
3. Players and coaches may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach or official.
4. Ball carriers MUST make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.
5. Defenders are not allowed to run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
6. Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship, as well:
 - a. Yell to cheer on your players, not to harass officials or other teams.
 - b. Keep comments clean and profanity free.
 - c. Compliment ALL players, not just one child or team.
7. Fans are required to keep fields safe and kids friendly:
 - a. Keep younger kids and equipment such as coolers, chairs and tents off of the track and field. The school district requests that only coaches, officials and players be permitted on the field.

Inclement Weather

1. In case of bad weather, please check the email you provided with your signup, as we will send a mass email advising of the situation.
2. If inclement weather prohibits us from playing, an updated schedule with make-up dates will be distributed within 2-4 business days via email to all league participants.

Penalties

General:

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 the rule clarification and interpretations. Players may not question judgment 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.

Spot Fouls:

Stripping	+ 10 yards & Automatic First Down
Defensive Unnecessary Roughness	+ 10 yards & Automatic First Down
Screening, Blocking or Running with the Ball Carrier	- 10 yards & Loss of Down
Charging	- 10 yards & Loss of Down
Flag Guarding	- 10 yards & Loss of Down
Offensive Unnecessary Roughness	- 10 yards & Loss of Down

Defensive Penalties:

Offside	+ 5 yards from line for scrimmage & Automatic First Down
Illegal Rush (Starting rush from inside 7 yard marker)	+ 5 yards from line for scrimmage & Automatic First Down
Illegal Flag Pull (Before the receiver has the ball)	+ 5 yards from line for scrimmage & Automatic First Down
Coach Interference	+ 5 yards from line for scrimmage & Automatic First Down
Roughing the Passer	+ 10 yards from line for scrimmage & Automatic First Down
Taunting	+ 10 yards from line for scrimmage & Automatic First Down
Defensive Pass Interference	Automatic First Down and +10 yards (if caught, the team can choose for it to be an automatic first down where the ball was caught)
Holding	SPOT FOUL, + 5 yards & Automatic First Down
Stripping	SPOT FOUL, + 10 yards & Automatic First Down
Defensive Unnecessary Roughness	SPOT FOUL, + 10 yards & Automatic First Down

Offensive Penalties:

Offside / False Start	- 5 yards from line of scrimmage & Loss of Down
Illegal Forward Pass (Pass received behind the line of scrimmage or throwing a pass beyond the line of scrimmage)	- 5 yards from line of scrimmage & Loss of Down
Illegal Motion (More than one person moving)	- 5 yards from line of scrimmage & Loss of Down
Delay of Game	- 5 yards from line of scrimmage & Loss of Down
Impeding the Rusher	- 5 yards from line of scrimmage & Loss of Down
Offensive Pass Interference	- 10 yards from line of scrimmage & Loss of Down
Screening, Blocking or Running with the Ball Carrier	SPOT FOUL, - 5 yards & Loss of Down
Charging	SPOT FOUL, - 10 yards & Loss of Down
Flag Guarding	SPOT FOUL, - 10 yards & Loss of Down
Offensive Unnecessary Roughness	SPOT FOUL, - 10 yards & Loss of Down