



Youth Flag Football Rules (for players of all ages)

I. League Description

Oswegoland Park District youth flag football is a recreational league designed to provide participants with a safe, fun environment in which to learn and play flag football. The league is designed to be instructional and help teach children the rules of the sport and also many other life lessons than can be learned from a team sport environment. Our league is intended to keep our children active and engaged. The coaches should enforce the OPD values of fair play, sportsmanship and teamwork.

II. Player Eligibility / Age Rules

1. All participants must be registered in the Park District Youth Flag Football based on their current grade. Coaches are not allowed to make any changes or additions to their rosters. All roster changes/additions/deletions must be done by OPD staff.
2. OPD uses the grade categories listed below. If participation is not great enough age groups may be combined at the discretion of the Park District.
 - A. 1st /2nd Grade Co-ed
 - B. 3rd/4th Grade Co-ed
 - C. 5th/6th Grade Co-ed
 - D. 7th/8th Grade Co-ed

III. Teams / Rosters

1. All team rosters are created and maintained by the Oswegoland Park District Athletics staff.
2. All rosters shall have a roster of between 8 and 12 players.

IV. Schedules

1. Game schedule will be created and maintained by the OPD staff.
2. The season shall consist of 7-8 games per season. This is a combination of Saturday and weeknight (Tuesday or Thursday) games.
3. All games will be played at PrairieFest Park.

V. Game format

1. Games shall consist of two 20 minute halves. The clock is a continuous running clock.
2. The official can stop the clock at their discretion for injury or to clarify or discuss a ruling on the field.
3. Games are played 5 vs 5. Teams must field a minimum of 5 players at all times. 5
4. Field size is 70 x 30.
5. A coin toss determines possession to start the game. The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense. The loser of the coin toss has the choice of direction. Possession changes to start the second half to the team that started the game on defense.
6. Teams change sides after 20 minutes of play.

VI. Playing Rules

1. General

- A. All possessions begin with the offensive team starting at its own 5-yard line. The offensive team has four plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield it then has four plays to score a touchdown.
- B. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield or fails to score a touchdown in its four allowable plays, possession of the ball changes and the opposing team begins with possession on its own 5-yard line.
- C. All possessions except for interceptions begin on the offense's 5-yard line. If a pass is intercepted, the play is blown dead at the spot and the intercepting team begins its possession from that point on the field.
- D. The ball is spotted where the ball is when the flag is pulled. Each time a ball is spotted, the team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.
- E. The ball must be snapped through the center's legs to begin each play. No snaps are allowed to be off to one side.
- F. NO BLOCKING OR TACKLING IS ALLOWED.
- G. All penalties are assessed from the line of scrimmage.
- H. Each team is allowed one 30 second and one 60 second time-out per half. The clock does stop on a timeout.
- I. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
- J. Games cannot end on a defensive penalty unless declined by the offense.

2. Scoring

- A. A team scores a touchdown by running or catching the ball in the opposing team's end-zone. A touchdown is worth 6 points.
- B. After a touchdown is scored the team has one attempt at an extra point conversion.
- C. The team can go for 1 point by taking one play from the defending team's 5-yard line.
- D. The team can go for 2 points by taking one play from the defending team's 12-yard line. (Spot will be marched off by the official 7 yards from the "no-run zone")
- E. A safety (downing a player in their own end zone) counts for 2 points.

3. Running

- A. The quarterback cannot run past the line of scrimmage with the ball after a direct snap from center.
- B. Teams must use legal handoffs. Only direct handoffs are permitted and there are no laterals or pitches anywhere on the field.
- C. Teams may use multiple legal handoffs
- D. "No-running zones" located five yards from each end zone and five yards on either side of midfield are designed to avoid short-yardage, power running situations.
- E. A player who takes a handoff can throw a forward pass as long as they are behind the original line of scrimmage for that play.
- F. Once the ball is handed off, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- G. Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding. Spinning is allowed to avoid a defender, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a defensive player.

4. Passing

- A. The quarterback has a seven second "pass clock" to get rid of the ball. If a pass is not thrown within seven seconds, the play is dead and is a loss of down.
- B. All passes must be forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage.
- C. Once the ball is handed off, the seven second "pass clock" is no longer in effect.
- D. Shovel passes are allowed.

5. Receiving

- A. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off legally behind the line of scrimmage).

- B. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time.
- C. A player must have at least one foot in bounds when making a reception.

6. Dead ball situations

- A. The play is ruled “dead” when a ball carrier’s flag is pulled. The ball is spotted where the ball carrier’s feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.
- B. The play is ruled “dead” when a ball carrier steps out of bounds.
- C. The play is “dead” when a touchdown, extra point conversion, or safety occurs.
- D. The play is ruled “dead” at the point of an interception. Interception returns are not allowed in 1st- 6th grade divisions. Once the ball is caught, the ball is dead and is spotted at the point where the intercepting team’s player’s feet were. 7th/8th grade division interceptions are returnable, even on extra point attempts.
- E. The ball is “dead” when a ball carrier’s knee hits the ground.
- F. The ball is “dead” when a ball carrier’s flag falls off of the player’s belt.
- G. The ball is “dead” if it dropped and hits the ground. There are no “fumbles”. Play is blown dead and the ball is spotted where the ball hit the ground with possession going to the offensive team and that down is lost.

7. Defense/Rushing the quarterback

- A. All players who attempt to rush the quarterback must be a minimum of 10 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Rushing is not allowed in the 1st/2nd grade division.
- B. Any number of players can rush the quarterback as long as they do so from a legal position.
- C. A sack occurs if the quarterback’s flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The play will be spotted where possession of the ball is once the flag is pulled.
- D. A quarterback can “throw the ball away” to avoid a sack. The pass must go beyond the line of scrimmage. In this case, the ball will be spotted back to the original line of scrimmage.
- E. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage.
- F. No blocking or “screening” is allowed at any time. The offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has the right to a clear path to the quarterback.
- G. Once the ball is handed off from the quarterback any defender may rush and attempt to down the ball carrier.
- H. A special marker, or the referee will indicate the 10-yard line from scrimmage for defenders before each snap.

8. Offensive Penalties

- A. All offensive penalties results in a loss of a down and yardage
- B. Illegal motion/False start – more than one person moving before the snap; moving towards or past the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped – 5-yard penalty and loss of down
- C. Illegal forward pass – pass thrown beyond the line of scrimmage – 5-yard penalty and loss of down
- D. Offensive interference – Illegal pick play, blocking, or pushing off or away a defender – 10-yard penalty and loss of down.
- E. Flag Obstruction/Guarding – using hands to illegally guard one’s flag from the defender. All jerseys must be tucked in before play begins. The flags must be on the player’s hips and free from obstruction – 10-yard penalty and loss of down.
- F. Delay of game – taking more than 30 seconds to begin play – Clock stops, 10-yard penalty and loss of down.
- G. Unsportsmanlike conduct – 15-yard penalty and loss of down.

9. Defensive Penalties

- A. All defensive penalties result in an automatic first down and associated yardage
- B. Offside – Crossing the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped – 5-yard penalty and automatic first down.
- C. Pass interference – making contact with the receiver before the ball arrives – 10-yard penalty and automatic first down.
- D. Illegal contact – holding, blocking, etc. – 10-yard penalty and automatic first down.
- E. Illegal flag pull – grabbing the player’s flag before the player has possession of the ball – 10 yard penalty and automatic first down.
- F. Illegal rushing – starting a rush of the quarterback from inside the 10-yard rush line – 10-yard penalty and automatic first down.
- G. Unsportsmanlike conduct – 15-yard penalty and automatic first down.

VII. Equipment

- 1. All players must wear a protective mouthpiece.
- 2. Players are allowed to wear molded rubber cleats or gym shoes. Metal cleats are not allowed.
- 3. Artificial limbs or braces must be completely padded so that no metal or hard plastic material is exposed.

4. No jeans, pants or shorts with belt loops or pockets are permitted. If a player arrives with no alternative clothing, he or she will not be permitted to play.
5. No player can participate while wearing a hard cast or brace with metal or hard plastic components.
6. Players should not wear any equipment or apparel that is considered dangerous to themselves or to other players.

This includes:

- Rings
 - Wristwatches
 - Earrings
 - Barrettes (ponytail holders must be rubber coated or plain)
 - Other jewelry such as necklaces and bracelets.
7. Players are allowed to wear jewelry that is either medical or religious in nature. They are advised to tuck this in to avoid any potential for injury.
 8. If players wear a sweatshirt or hooded garment under their team shirt, they are asked to tuck hoods underneath their game shirt for safety purposes.
 9. Players are advised to tuck in their game shirt to their pants or shorts.
 10. Please see the following chart for correct football sizing per age group:

Grade Level	Ball Size
1 st /2 nd Grade	Pee Wee
3 rd /4 th Grade	Junior
5 th /6 th Grade	Junior
7 th /8 th Grade	Youth

VIII. Officiating / Referees

1. All referees will be assigned by the OPD Athletics staff.
2. All games will be refereed by at least 1 official.
3. All interpretations of the rules during the game made by the referee are final. Officials do reserve the right to remove any participant or coach from the game field if such disciplinary action is warranted. Actions that may be deemed inappropriate or warrant ejection or removal include but are not limited to: player safety concerns, foul language, over aggressive or physical play, taunting, bad sportsmanship, etc.
4. Trash talking, taunting, and inappropriate language, by coaches, players or spectators will not be tolerated in any form. This will result in immediate removal from the game.

IX. Playoffs / Awards

1. There are no playoffs or postseason play for the OPD youth flag football league.

X. Player Conduct / Sportsmanship

1. Any conduct determined to be unsportsmanlike or unruly by either the referee or OPD staff will result in one warning.
2. The second instance of misconduct shall result in an ejection. Any player ejected from a game for any reason may not be allowed to participate in that team's next schedule game if deemed appropriate by the OPD staff. The Park District staff reserves the right to extend the suspension period if the reason for ejection in their opinion is severe enough.

