



## Flag Football Rules

### The Basics

- A coin toss determines first possession.
- 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 3 plays to score a touchdown. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on its 5-yard line.
- If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its 5-yard line.
- All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yard line.
- Interceptions may be returned.
- **All defensive players must be aligned at least 1 yard from the line of scrimmage.**
- **Coaches are NOT allowed on the field. Coaches can run on the field to call a play, but must be off field before the play starts.**
  - **U7 coaches can be on the field, but must stay in back field when play starts and cannot touch players during play. Intentional interference during a game will result in a 5 yard penalty.**

### Players

- Teams must field a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 7 players to start and finish a game. **(7v7 will be played)**
- Any team that does not have at least five players ten minutes after games are scheduled to start will result in a forfeit. A scrimmage will be played (if possible) with the players that are at the field.

- **All players must play at least 6 downs per half**

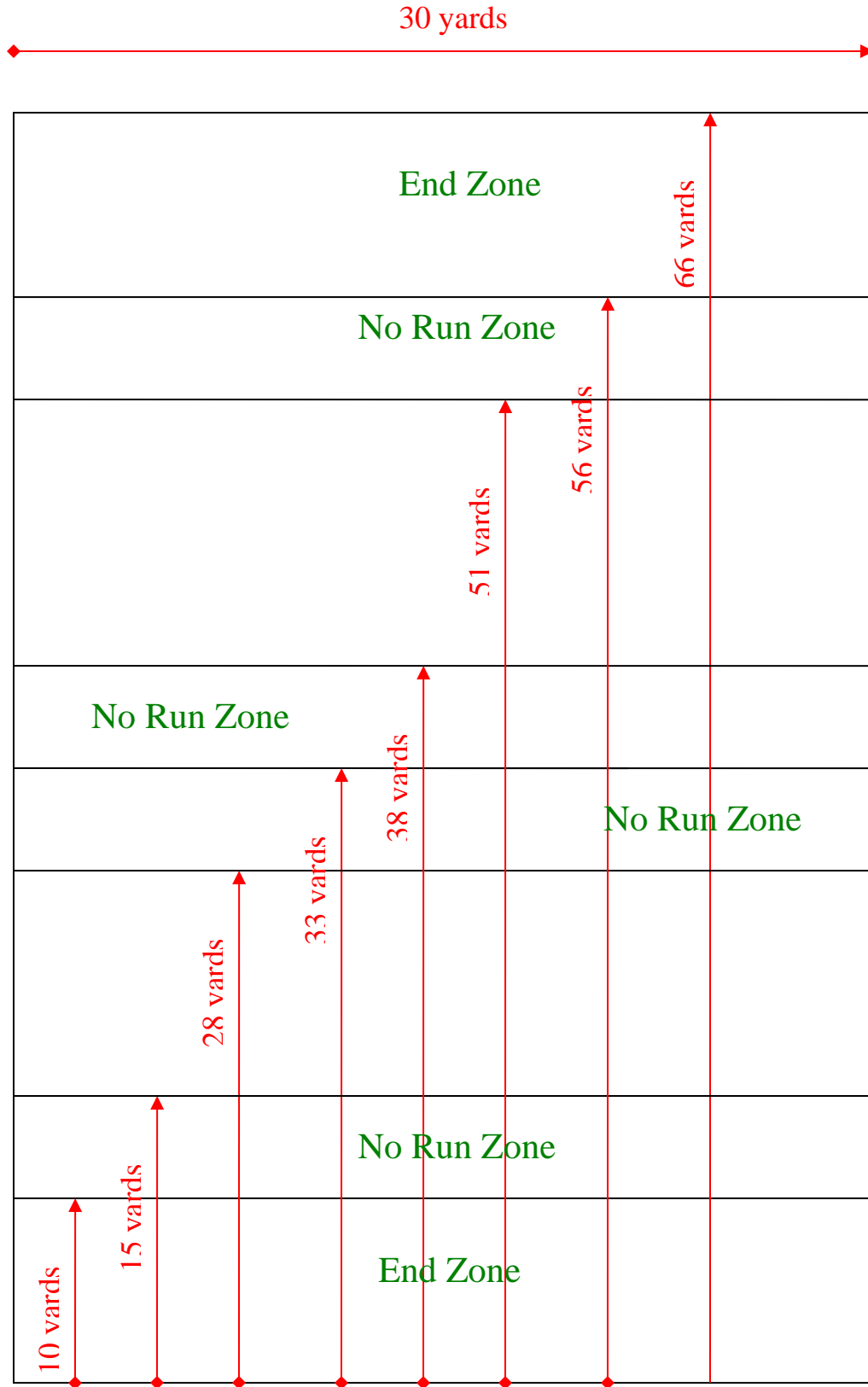
### **Timing/Overtime**

- U7 (5&6 year old) games are played to 30 minutes running time (2-15 min halves).  
  
U9 (ages 7-8) are played to 40 minutes running time (2-20 min halves).  
  
U12 (9-11 year olds) U15 (12-14 year olds) are played 50 minutes running time (2-25 min halves).
- There will be no overtime during regular season. If a playoff occurs, overtime will be in the college format. Each team will receive a possession with 3 downs to score, etc. The ball will be spotted at midfield (50 yard line) for the start of each overtime possession.
- Each time the ball is spotted by the official, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced. This rule will be called liberally in the 5&6 yr. old division
- The quarterback has 5 seconds to pass/handoff ball once it is snapped. After those 5 seconds the defensive line (1 yard off the ball) can rush.
- Each team has 3 time-outs per half.
- **Officials can add additional time for unplanned stoppages at their discretion.**

### **GAME RESCHEDULES/RAINOUTS/INCLEMENT WEATHER**

Only the referee or The Family Y Youth Sports staff may cancel, postpone or reschedule a scheduled game. Should a game's progress be terminated due to weather conditions after one half has been completed, the game will be considered official. If the match is terminated or postponed before the end of the first half and cannot be continued, the game shall be rescheduled. Rescheduled games must be coordinated through and approved by The Family Y Youth Sports staff only. The incomplete game will be rescheduled and posted on YGametime.

# Flag Football Field Dimensions



## Scoring

- Touchdown: 6 points

**\*\* On all touchdowns, the officials will check the belt to ensure that it is attached properly. If the belt is not attached properly and tied to prevent pulling, the touchdown will be nullified and will result in a loss of down at the original line of scrimmage.**

- Extra point:
  - 1 point (played from 5-yard line) **Pass/Run** or
  - 2 points (played from 12-yard line) **Pass/Run**
- **\*\* If defense intercepts offenses extra point attempt and returns it for a score the defense will be awarded the same amount of points the offense was attempting and the scoring defense will get the ball on the 5 yard line.**
  - -For example, if the offense goes for 1 and the defense intercepts the ball and returns it for a score then the scoring defense will be awarded 1 point and the ball on the 5 yard line.
  - -If the defenses flag is pulled before scoring while attempting the return of the extra point the play is dead and the defense gets the ball at their 5 yard line, not where the flag was pulled.
- Safety:
  - (U7) Offense is charged a loss of down the ball is placed on the 5 yard line if that was not the offenses final down.
  - (U9, U12, U15) 2 points and the other team's offense takes over on their 5 yard line.

## Running

- The quarterback cannot run with the ball past the line of scrimmage even when rushed.
- Offense may use multiple handoffs.
- "No-running/pitching 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. **(\*Note: There is not a "no-running/pitching zone" at midfield in the 5&6 year old age division)**
- The player who takes the handoff/pitch can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.

- Once the ball has left the QB's possession, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- **Spinning is allowed, but players cannot hurdle another player/no diving.**
- The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.

### Receiving

- All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off/pitched behind the line of scrimmage).
- As in the NFL, only one player is allowed in motion at a time.
- A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.

### Passing

- **The quarterback has five-seconds to throw the ball.** If a pass is not thrown within the five seconds, the defense is eligible to rush. Once the ball is handed off/pitched, the five-second rule no longer is in effect.
- **U9 – U15 the ball must go past the line of scrimmage when in a no run zone to be considered a legal pass. This rule only applies when in a No Run Zone. In the U7 league a forward pass does not have to make it past the line of scrimmage.**
- **A pass is defined as any ball in forward motion no matter how it is thrown.**
- **Ball must be fully snapped from the center to QB before pass or hand off. (There must be a full exchange from the center to the QB underneath the legs.)**
- Interceptions may be returned, and the ball will be marked where the interceptor's feet are when their flag is pulled. The ball will be marked as a first down and the defense will take over going in the same direction as they intercepted the ball.

### Dead Balls

- The ball must be snapped between the legs, not off to one side, or dragged on the ground to start play.
- Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.

- Play is ruled “dead” when:
  - Ball carrier’s flag is pulled
  - Ball carrier steps out of bounds
  - Touchdown or safety is scored
  - Ball carrier’s knee hits the ground
  - If flag falls out without cause, player is ruled down once touched by an opponent (at least one hand)
  - If after snapping the ball center places the ball on the ground

**Note: There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball is fumbled (ball cannot be intentionally thrown to the ground to gain yardage). If the offensive team “fumbles” the ball in their defending endzone it will be ruled a touchback and the opposing team will receive the ball 15 yards from where the ball was “fumbled”.**

### **Rushing the Quarterback**

- All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage. **(\*Note: No rushing in the 5&6 yr old age division\*)**
- Once the ball is handed off, the seven-yard rule no longer is in effect, and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage. A special marker, or the referee, will designate seven yards from the line of scrimmage. Remember, no blocking or tackling is allowed.

### **Blocking**

- Lateral Blocking will be allowed in all age groups but more importantly we would like for coaches to focus on fundamentals: lining up, hiking, handoffs, throwing, and receiving. Screen blocking shall take place without contact. This action must be a Lateral movement. The blocker shall have their hands and arms at their sides, behind their back or grasping their jersey. A blocker cannot use their hands, arms, elbows, legs or body to initiate contact. If they use contact it will be called an Illegal blocking penalty.

### **Sportsmanship/Roughing**

- If the field monitors or referee witnesses any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, aggressive blocking, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game. **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED. (WILL BE STRICTLY ENFORCED)**

- Unsportsmanlike conduct is a penalty that will be enforced and applies to both players and coaches. This includes trash talking to the opponents and officials. The players and coaches may be assessed a warning before penalized depending on the nature of the infraction. The penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct is 5 yards on the team committing the penalty and loss of down if on offense. Players and coaches assessed a second unsportsmanlike penalty in the game will be ejected from the game.

### Attire

- All players must wear given uniform and uniforms **MUST BE TUCKED IN**. Cleats are allowed, except for metal spikes. Inspections must be made. All players must wear a protective mouthpiece; there are no exceptions. Also, pants and shorts with pockets must either have a zipper or be taped up.

### Penalties

All penalties will be called by the referee.

Defense: (offense can decline penalties)

- Offsides
  - Five yards from the line of scrimmage
- Interference
  - Five yards and automatic first down from the line of scrimmage
- Illegal contact
  - (Holding, blocking, etc., diving for flag)
  - Five yards from the line of scrimmage
- Illegal FLAG pull
  - (Before receiver has ball)
  - Five yards and automatic first down from the line of scrimmage
- Illegal rushing
  - (starting rush from inside 7-yard marker)
  - Five yards from the line of scrimmage

### Offense (defense can decline)

- False start: (movement forward by offense before the snap)
  - Dead ball penalty, no snap and five yards from line of scrimmage
- Illegal motion/offsidess: (more than one person moving, etc./lined up offsidess)
  - Five yards from the line of scrimmage
- Illegal forward pass: (pass thrown beyond line of scrimmage in no run zone)
  - Five yards from the line of scrimmage
- **Illegal Blocking (LEGAL obstruction of an opponent is possible without using any part of the body to initiate contact)**- Screen blocking shall take place without contact. The blocker shall have their hands and arms at their sides, behind their back or grasping their jersey. A blocker cannot use their hands, arms, elbows, legs or body to initiate contact. If they use contact it will be called an Illegal Blocking penalty
  - Five yards from the line of scrimmage
- Offensive pass interference: (illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender)
  - Five yards from the line of scrimmage
- **FLAG guarding - "initiating contact with the defender in order to block their attempt to pull players flag"**
  - Flag guarding is a spot foul and the penalty is 10 yards from the spot of the infraction.
- Delay of game
  - Five yards from the line of scrimmage
- Diving/Dangerous Play
  - Five yards from the line of scrimmage and applies to both offense and defense.

Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play. **All penalties will be assessed from the original line of scrimmage except for flag guarding.**



Only the Head Coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations during a time out or Halftime. 1 warning will be given, and then the coach will be asked to leave the field.

Games cannot end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.

All penalties can be declined by the team that did not commit the penalty.

- **No Run Zone**

- Players are not allowed to run in the No Run Zone at any time.
- The only exception to running in the NRZ is when starting a possession, and if a player gets sacked or flag is pulled in the No Run Zone, they will be allowed to run out on the next play.
- Remember there are only 2 no run zones for each possession.
- Once they have made it through the NO RUN ZONE they do not have to go back.
- Once the offensive team has entered the NRZ, regardless if the team receives a penalty to take the team out of the NRZ, the team will still have to treat it as a NRZ until they make it out.

**\*\*\*Mercy Rules (Team that is up 5 Touchdowns) \*\*\***

- **Offense**

- Will only receive 1 down to midfield and one down to score a TD

- **Defense**

- Will not Be able to rush
- If interception takes place, that team must take a knee.

**\*\*\*Mercy Rules (Team that is down 5 Touchdowns) \*\*\***

- Will receive an extra down to score a TD. (4 downs, instead of 3)
- Will receive an extra timeout

