

Flag Football Rules

Revised: Aug. 5, 2019



General Game Format:

1. The New Lenox Community Park District - Flag Football League is played with a 5 on 5 player format.
 - **Tike Division will be played with a 4 on 4 player format.**
2. **Coaches please make sure all players get equal playing time and experience multiple positions on the field throughout the season. No player is allowed to play the entire game!**
 - *We recommend for coaches to have a set of players that play offense for one half and defense for another half. This gives players experience on both sides of the ball.*
3. A coin toss shall begin each game. The away team will make the call. The team winning the toss will have two options:
 - First possession in the 1st half
 - A side to defend
4. The team that loses the toss will get the remaining option. At the start of the 2nd half, possession will be given to the team that started the game on defense and teams will switch direction.
5. All games will be played in **two 20-minute halves with a 3-minute half time.**
6. Games will be played with a running clock. Time will be stopped by the referee on injuries and time outs. Clock will resume on the following snap of the ball. In the last 2 minutes of each half, the clock will only stop on **penalties, touchdowns** and on the change of possession. The clock will resume when the ball is set.
7. The clock will not stop if a team is up by 30 or more points.
8. All possession changes, except interceptions, will start on the offense's 5-yard line.
 - **A defensive interception may be advanced by the player intercepting the ball until the player is ruled down or scores a touchdown. If the player does not score a touchdown, possession of the ball will start where the player was ruled down.**
9. If play is stopped due to injury, that player must sit out one play. If the clock is stopped due to injury within the final 2 minutes of the half or the game, a time-out will be charged to the team. If the team does not have a time-out, there is a 5 second runoff option for the opponent.
10. Officials can stop the clock any time at their discretion.
11. **Each team is allowed one 60 second and one 30 second timeout per half. Time outs do not carry over from the 1st half and do not carry over into Overtime.**
12. A volunteer will be scheduled to control the scoreboard, the chains and the down marker. The chains and down marker will only be used for the Teen (all season) and Junior Division (starting game 5). If the volunteer does not show up, then the away team must provide a volunteer for the chains and down marker and the home team must provide a volunteer for the scoreboard.

Game Day Rules:

1. **Pre-Game Check:**
 - a. Before the start of the game, each team is to line up in front of the scorer's table with their backs facing the table. The staff will be checking the following items:
 - i. Jersey - Tucked into shorts/pants and player's numbers are visible
 - ii. Pants/Shorts: There cannot be any colors within the shorts that match the color of the flag belt
 - iii. Mouth Guards – Must have a mouth guard and be in good condition
 - iv. Flag Belts - clipped at the middle of the waist and not tied
 - v. Cleats – molded and not metal
2. **Home Team:**

- a. Line up on the scoreboard side of the field for all games.
 - b. If there is no staff present, the home team is responsible for keeping score during the game (Must be 14 or older)
3. **Visiting Team:**
- a. Line up on the “chain side” (opposite side of the scoreboard) for all games.
 - b. If there is not enough color distinction between the team’s jerseys, the visiting team will wear scrimmage vests.
4. **Spectators**
- a. All spectators must be at least 5 yards away from the perimeter of the field during games. This is for the safety of the kids who are playing the game as well as those who are watching the game.
 - b. Spectators are not allowed on the team bench. Only players and coaches are allowed to be on the team bench.

Uniform/Equipment:

1. **Jersey:**
 - a. Jerseys must be tucked in at all times and cannot have any overlay covering the Flag Belt.
2. **Shorts/Pants:**
 - a. The player’s shorts/pants cannot have any color matching the color of their flag. If players do not have the proper shorts/pants, they are ineligible to play. (NO EXCEPTIONS)
3. **Flag Belt:**
 - a. The flag belt must be clipped at the middle of the waist and the belt must be visible at all times. Any player found with the flag belt tied around their waist will result in an Unsportsmanlike Conduct Penalty.
4. **Mouth Guards:**
 - a. All players must use a mouth guard. If the mouth guard is not all the way in at the snap of the ball, a Delay of Game Penalty will be enforced.
5. **Cleats/Shoes:**
 - a. Players are allowed to wear molded rubber cleats or gym shoes. **Metal cleats are not allowed.**
6. **Game Day Footballs:**
 - a. Both teams must use the game ball of the appropriate size provided by the staff.
 - b. Football sizes:
 - i. Tike – Pee Wee size football (Wilson K2)
 - ii. Pee Wee – Pee Wee size football (Wilson K2)
 - iii. Youths – Junior size football (Wilson TDJ)
 - iv. Junior – Youth size football (Wilson TDY)
 - v. Teen - Youth size football (Wilson TDY)

Scoring:

- Touchdown = 6 points
- Extra Point = 1 point (take possession at the 5-yard line, option to run or pass)
- Extra Point = 2 points (take possession at the 10-yard line, option to run or pass)
 - During an extra point, if the Defensive Team intercepts a pass and reaches the opposite end zone, they will be awarded the number of points the Offensive Team was attempting.
- Safety = 2 points (Turnover and ball goes to the defense)

Overtime Rules:

1. A coin flip will determine 1st OT possession. In overtime, teams will have only one 60 second time out.
 - **Time outs are NOT carried over from the original game.**

2. Ball is placed on the 12-yard line and each team has a chance to score. (Follows college overtime rules)
3. There is no overtime in the Tike Division. The game will result in a tie.

Rules by Division:

Tike Division: Grade K – 4 on 4 player format

1. There are no referees for this division as the coaches will control the game.
2. Tike Coaches are allowed on the field on both offense and defense, but should stay back far enough to avoid the play
3. **NO Blitzing**
4. Laterals and pitches are NOT allowed in the Tike divisions.
5. Interceptions may **not** be advanced in the Tike division. The defensive player is ruled down at the spot of the interception.
6. ***No Extra Points allowed for the Tike Division.***
7. There is **NOT** a “No running zone” in this division
8. **Tike Division** – Defense is not allowed to rush in at the runner until that offensive player has crossed the line of scrimmage. **Please give these kids time to think about what they are doing and be able to hand the ball off without immediately getting their flag ripped off.**
9. There will be no overtime as the game will end in a tie.

Pee-Wee Division Grades 1-2

1. One offensive coach is allowed on the field with the offense but should stand 10 yards behind the line of scrimmage during play. One defensive coach is allowed on the field to set the defense before the snap of the ball. The defensive coach must be off the field during play.
2. The center must hike the ball between the legs or off to the side of their body, either directly to the QB or in shotgun formation.
3. **NO Blitzing**

Youth Division: Grades 3-4

1. One offensive coach is allowed on the field with the offense but should stand 10 yards behind the line of scrimmage during play. One defensive coach is allowed on the field to set the defense before the snap of the ball. The defensive coach must be off the field during play.
2. **The center must hike the ball between the legs either directly to the QB or shotgun.**
3. **NO Blitzing**

Junior Division: Grades 5-6

1. One coach is allowed to be in the huddle during offense or defense but must be off of the field before the snap of the ball.
2. **The center must hike the ball between the legs either directly to the QB or shotgun.**
3. Teams are able to begin blitzing, starting Game 5. Starting Game 5, Coaches will come together during the captains meeting and have the option to come to an agreement to not blitz. Both teams must say “no” to blitzing in order to call off the blitz. If one team wants to blitz, then blitzing will be allowed throughout the game.
 - *This is to prepare the kids for the next division.*

Teen Division: Grades 7-8

1. **No** coaches are allowed on the field during play. If a time out is called, one coach may go into the huddle with the offense or defense but must leave the field prior to the snap of the ball.
2. **The center must hike the ball between the legs either directly to the QB or shotgun.**
3. Can blitz the entire season.
4. There is a Single Elimination Tournament the Saturday after the regular season for this division only.

Offense:

1. The offensive team takes possession of the ball on their 5-yard line and has 3 plays to cross mid-field to get a first down. Once a team crosses mid-field, they have 3 plays to score a touchdown. **(Once a team gets a first down and then lose yardage, they CAN NOT get another 1st down)**
2. If the offensive team fails to cross mid-field or fails to score a touchdown, possession of the ball changes and the opposing team starts its drive from its 5-yard line.
3. Offense will consist of a center, quarterback and 3 other positions of your choice.
 - **The 3 other offensive positions must be at least an arm's length apart. "Bunch" formations are illegal!**
4. The center must be lined up over the football.
5. Each time the referee spots the ball, the offensive team will have 30 seconds to begin the next play. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty will be enforced.
6. **The quarterback will be designated as the player who receives the ball from the center, regardless of where the players are positioned on the field.**
7. The quarterback cannot run with the ball past the line of scrimmage under any circumstance. (Exception on the blitz within the Teen Division and Junior Division starting game 5)
8. All direct hand-offs can be made **in any direction**, as long as, it is behind the line of scrimmage. Laterals or pitches must be made behind or directly to the side of the Quarterback, as well as behind the line of scrimmage. The offense may use multiple hand-offs as long as they occur behind the line of scrimmage.
 - Hand-offs, laterals and pitches will all be defined as running plays.
 - A lateral is any thrown ball to a receiver who is directly to the side or behind the quarterback. This will be considered a running play.
9. All passes must be received beyond the line of scrimmage. "Shovel" passes are allowed but it must be caught beyond the line of scrimmage.
 - **This is an NFL Youth Flag Football rule for the safety of the kids.**
10. Passes may be thrown by the Quarterback or any other player who receives the ball from the Quarterback, as long as the player is behind the Quarterback and behind the line of scrimmage.
11. There may only be 1 forward motion of the ball from one offensive player to another within a play.
 - **Example 1: On a Running Back or Wide Receiver Pass, the player must receive the ball from behind the quarterback and behind the line of scrimmage. They are not allowed to pass the ball if they receive a forward handoff. This will result in an illegal pass penalty.**
 - **Example 2: If there are multiple handoffs behind the line of scrimmage, only one handoff can be forward. If a second is made, it will result in an illegal pass penalty.**
12. The quarterback has 7 seconds to throw the ball. After a handoff, lateral or pitch has been made, the player with the ball may still make a pass. This player does not have a 7-second count as the defense is allowed to rush after the handoff, lateral or pitch has been made.
13. **"No Running Zone" – (Designed to avoid short yardage power running situations) Located 5 yards before mid-field and 5 yards before the end zone. If the ball is spotted on or within these 5 yards, the offense cannot the run ball passed the line of scrimmage in any fashion. All plays must be pass plays, even with a handoff, pitch or lateral.**
 - **The defense is not allowed to blitz within the "No Run Zone."**
 - **After a handoff has been made, the defense is allowed to rush the carrier. Once the defense crosses the line of scrimmage on the rush, the ball carrier is still not allowed to run across the line of scrimmage as the play must be a pass.**
 - **The 7 second count is eliminated after a handoff has been made.**
14. Once the ball leaves the quarterback's hand, then all defensive players are allowed to rush.

15. Spinning is allowed by the ball carrier; however, they cannot jump or dive to elude a tackler.
16. The ball will be spotted where the football is when the flag is pulled. On a fumble, the ball will be spotted where the ball touches the ground, unless it is fumbled forward and it will be spotted where the runner lost control of the ball.
17. **The ball carrier will be ruled down and the play will be over when one of the following occur:**
 - The ball carrier's flag is pulled,
 - The ball carrier runs out of bounds,
 - The ball carrier's body from their waistline and down touches the ground
 - The ball carrier is touched after flag falls off voluntarily
 - The ball carrier scores a touchdown
 - Once the ball hits the ground on a fumble.
18. If a defender squares up in front of the ball carrier to make a tackle, the ball carrier must make an attempt to elude the defensive player. If the offensive player runs into the defense, a blocking penalty will be called on the offense.
19. **No blocking or screening is allowed by the offense.**
 - *Blocking: Any time an offensive player intentionally makes contact with a defender.*
 - *Screening: Any time an offensive player intentionally hinders a defender from the most direct path of the ball carrier. No contact is necessary.*
 - *Blocking and screening calls will be judgment calls by the referee and cannot be questioned by a coach or player.*
 - *It is recommended that all offensive players without the ball immediately stop, once the offense has possession and has passed the line of scrimmage.*
20. One player may be in motion at the snap of the ball. If more than one player is in motion before the play, they must be set for 1 second before the snap of the ball.

Defense:

1. Defense will consist of 5 players, lined up in any formation.
2. Defense may play man-to-man or zone.
3. A defender may not intentionally make contact with an offensive player.
 - ***There will be absolutely no diving (Player leaves their feet) for flags allowed. A penalty will be enforced regardless of whether the defender pulls the flag or not.***
4. The player(s) blitzing must line up 7 yards behind the line of scrimmage and cannot lineup over the center. **Once the defense crosses the line of scrimmage on a blitz the quarter back is allowed to advance the ball.**
5. NO BLITZING will be allowed when a TEAM is up by 18+ points
6. Interceptions must be advanced by the player intercepting the ball; **the player may not pitch, lateral or hand the ball off to a teammate.**
7. **If the defensive team is up by 30 or more points and an interception is made, then the player is down at the spot of the interception.**

Penalties:

- All penalties may be accepted or declined by the opposing team.
- There will be NO walk-in touchdowns. The ball will be spotted where the ball is down.

Offensive Penalties:

Off-Sides	5 yards from the line of scrimmage (LOS). <i>Ball is whistled dead immediately, the outcome of the play is not allowed. A replay of the down will take place after the penalty is enforced</i>
Illegal Motion	5 yards from the LOS. <i>Ball is whistled dead immediately, the outcome of the play is not allowed. A replay of the down will take place after the penalty is enforced</i>
Illegal Forward Pass	5 yards from the LOS and loss of down This can only take place when the ball is caught and advanced behind the line of scrimmage, in front of the quarterback, or if the passer crosses the line of scrimmage before throwing the ball
Illegal Play	Team huddles up and hides the ball and one teammate comes out with the ball and confuses the other team. The ball will be spotted back at the original LOS and a loss of down will be issued.
Illegal "Bunch" Formation	5 yards from the LOS and replay the down.
Offensive Pass Interference	10 yards from the LOS and loss of down
Flag Guarding	10 yards from the <i>spot of the foul</i> and loss of down
Screening/Blocking	10 yards from the spot of the foul and loss of down.
Delay of Game	5 yards from the LOS and replay the down – If a second delay of game penalty is called then the clock will stop.
Illegal Contact	<i>10 yards from the spot of the foul and loss of down</i>
QB Runs	Loss of down. Ball spotted at the previous line of scrimmage.
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	During the Play: 10 yards from the LOS and replay the down. After the Play: 10 yards from the end of the play

Defensive Penalties:

- Offensive Team can refuse any penalty and take the result of the play
- **The half or the game cannot end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines the penalty.**

Off-Sides	5 yards from the LOS, replay the down
Illegal Rushing	5 yards from the LOS, replay the down
Pass Interference	Offense is awarded the ball at the spot of the foul Automatic 1 st down
Illegal Flag Pull (Before the receiver has the ball)	5 yards from the LOS - Automatic 1 st down
Illegal Contact	10 yards from the spot of the foul, replay the down
Illegal Dive	10 yards from the spot of the foul
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	10 yards from LOS, replay the down

Unsportsmanlike Conduct / Roughing:

- If the referee or field monitor witnesses any deliberate acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, or any other physical acts, the game will be stopped, the player will be removed for the remainder of the game.
- Players may celebrate with their teammates but cannot celebrate in a choreographed way as taunting.
- Arguing with the officials or constantly verbally abusing the officials will not be tolerated. If this occurs a warning will be given and then a penalty will be enforced. Depending on the severity, the player, coach or fan may be ejected without warning from the game. If the player, coach or fan will not leave, the police will be called.
- If a coach walks onto the field to question an official, the team will be charged a time out or delay of game. If a coach wants clarification on a rule interpretation or a play, they can ask the referee coordinator after the play, at half time or after the game.
- All spectators are responsible to show good sportsmanship towards the coaches, referees and opposing team. Failure to do so will result in a penalty to your team, and they will be asked to leave the premises.