



## RFYFA 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Grade Flag Football League Rules and Expectations

When talking to your team, make sure you are on their level and not talking over their heads. **Make sure there is equal playing time among the members of the team so that no kid is left out. Additionally, the coaches should make all efforts to have each player touch the ball each game including the year-end tournament. One coach from each team will be required to keep track of substitutions and touches each game on the Team Roster.** Learn your kid's first names and **call them by name** whenever talking to them in practices and games. This shows them that you care!

### Beginning the Game: Field Dimensions

The field will be 40 yards long, with 10-yard-deep end zones. The field will be 30 yards wide. There are "no run" zones 5-yards before midfield (first down marker) and 5-yards before the end zone. The intent is to not allow the offense to run the ball when so close to scoring or gaining a first down. Players will perform "rock, paper, scissors" to determine possession at the start of the game.

### Rule 1: The Game, Field, Players, and Equipment

- Teams: Shall consist of six (6) players, with the minimum starting number of five (5). On Offense teams will have six (6) youth players. On Defense teams will have six (6) youth players. One to three referees will be available for each game.
- Before plays there can be two coaches on the field for each team. During plays there can only be one coach on the field for each team.
- Equipment of Players: Players will not wear helmets, but it is required that each youth player wear a mouth guard when on the field. In addition, players must wear tennis shoes or rubber cleats. The home team will wear the blue jersey and the away team will wear the gold jersey. All player jersey's must be tucked into shorts/pants when on the field. Player shorts/pants should not have pockets, if the player has pockets, the pockets must be taped shut. The flag belt must be worn, so there is one flag on each hip of the player. In addition, the flag belt cannot have excess material dangling off it. The excess material should be cut and/or taped prior to the start of the game.
- Every player should get a chance to touch the ball at least once per game.
- If a team has a 17+ point lead, they must give the ball to less experienced players.

### Rule 2: Periods and Time Factors

- Playing Time and Intermissions: Playing time will consist of approximately two 20-minute halves. Halftime will be 2 min. long. The play clock is 45 seconds, with a warning to the offense for the first offense. The game will have a running clock, with the exception of the last two minutes. During the last two minutes of the game, the clock will stop for incomplete passes, players running out of bounds, turnovers, timeouts, and touchdowns.
- The Quarterback must throw the ball within eight seconds of the snap, or it will be a loss of down. The ref will count aloud once they get to five seconds.
- Timeouts: Each team will have one timeout per half.
- Tie Game: Will end in a tie.

### Rule 3: Ball in Play, Dead Ball, and Out-of-Bounds





- Inadvertent Whistle: If an official blows his or her whistle inadvertently, the ball is dead and the play stops. Referee's judgment will govern the situation.
- Fumbles: **All fumbles are dead as soon as the ball touches the ground.**
- Down: Once any part of ball carrier's body touches the ground (excluding hands and feet) player shall be ruled down. **Players will be marked down where they are when their flag comes off, NOT where the ball is when the flag comes off.**

#### **Rule 4: Putting the Ball in Play to Begin Game and or Series**

- There are no kickoffs. At the beginning of the game and each half the "receiving team" (or team on offense) begins at their own 5-yard line.
- Punts: There will be no actual punts during the game. The Offense will get a first down at the midfield marker, or on 4<sup>th</sup> down they can choose to turn the ball over to the Defense. In that situation, the Defense moves to Offense and will start with the ball at their own 5-yard line.

#### **Rule 5: Snapping, Handing, and Passing the Ball**

- Legal snap: The ball must be snapped with one fluid motion from the ground. Legal **snaps need NOT be through the legs.**
- Passing Plays: A forward pass may be made from any point behind the line of scrimmage. Handing the ball forward will not be considered a forward pass. Only one foot needs to touch in bounds for a pass to be complete.
- Pass Interference: During a legal forward pass, contact which interferes with an eligible receiver is pass interference, unless it occurs when two or more eligible receivers make a simultaneous and bona fide attempt to reach, catch, or bat a pass. It is also pass interference if an eligible receiver is deflagged prior to touching the ball. In addition, if the pass interference by either player is intentional or unsportsmanlike, his or her team shall be penalized an additional five yards.
- Running Plays: **THE QB CANNOT RUN PAST THE LINE OF SCRIMMAGE (LOS).** The only exception is if the quarterback is rushed by a blitzing who started 7 yards away from the LOS. In this case, the quarterback cannot rush past the LOS until the rusher crosses the LOS. Fake handoffs or "play action" plays are allowed, but once the fake handoff occurs any defender can cross the LOS to rush the quarterback/running back.

#### **Rule 6: Scoring Plays and Touchbacks**

- Touchdowns: A touchdown scored shall be worth six points. After touchdowns, teams will choose to attempt an extra point conversion from the 5-yard line or 10-yard line. All conversions from the 5-yard line are one point, while all conversions from the 10-yard line are 2 points. Running plays are not allowed on extra point attempts from the 5-yard line.
- Safeties: There are no safeties in this league. If a player is "sacked" or stopped in their own end zone, they will start from the 1-yard line on the next play. The only exception is if a team is sacked or stopped in their own end zone on 4<sup>th</sup> down. In that situation the defensive team will be awarded 2 points and given the ball at midfield.

#### **Rule 7: Conduct of Players and Others**





- Offensive Screen Blocking: The offensive screen block is allowed. The screen blocker shall have his/her hands and arms at his/her side. Any use of the hands, arms, elbows, legs, or body to initiate contact during an offensive player's screen block is illegal. A player must be on his/her feet before, during and after executing a screen block.
- Use of Hands or Arms by the Defense: Defensive players must go around the offensive player's screen block. The arms and hands may not be used as a wedge to contact the opponent. Screen blocks will be judged as legal or illegal similar to how blocks and charges are judged in Basketball.
- Runner Guarding the Flag belt: Runners shall not flag guard by using their hands, shoulders, arms, or the ball to deny the opportunity for opponent to pull or remove the flag. This includes "stiff arming" the defender. The runner will be called "down" on the spot if the ref calls flag guarding.
- Spinning: Spin moves are allowed.
- Loss of Flags: When a runner loses his/her flag accidentally, inadvertently, or intentionally, that player is down where the flag came off. If the player catches a ball without a flag they are considered down at the spot of the catch.

### **Rule 8 – Defensive Alignment, Interceptions and Blitzing the Quarterback**

Defensive players must not line up closer than 3 yards to the line of scrimmage. Defensive players can blitz the quarterback a maximum of two (2) times per half. A defensive player is allowed to blitz once per game. The coaches will have to track blitzes to ensure one player does not blitz multiple times per game. When blitzing the rusher must line up seven (7) yards away from the LOS before the snap. This blitz mark will be set by the referee. The rusher cannot go past the blitz mark until the ball is snapped, or the blitz will be considered illegal.

The defense cannot cross the line of scrimmage until a handoff has been made by the offense, or a fake handoff has been executed. Interceptions can be returned for a touchdown. If the intercepting player's flag is pulled prior to reaching the endzone, the ball will be spotted at that position on the field.

### **Rule 9 – Penalties**

Any penalty call by the referee results in a 5-yard gain or loss. The only exceptions to this are the following:

- Pass Interference – 15-yard penalty
- Poor Conduct – 15-yard penalty

Poor Conduct is determined by the referee, but examples include swearing, intentional tackling, running through players that are screen blocking, taunting the opposing team at any time including during team celebrations etc. If a taunting penalty is called on the team that scored a touchdown, the touchdown will be disallowed and there will be a 15-yard penalty on the offense and replay the down.

### **Rule 10 – First Downs**

There will be one first down at midfield. This will be marked by cones on the field and does not change. Teams start at the 5-yard line to begin their drive. This means they only have 15 yards to go to reach their first down. The offense will have four downs to get a first down at midfield. If a first down is achieved the offense will have another four downs to score a touchdown.

### **Rule 11 – Substitutions**

Substitutions will take place freely throughout the game on both sides during dead ball situations.

