



**Youth Flag Football Rules
8U – 12U Leagues
Revised 7/2016**

The following are modifications made within the City of Reynoldsburg Youth Flag Football Leagues. All other rules will be governed by the Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) Football Rules. All players must be registered with a signed release form by his/her parent or guardian before being eligible to participate. **The City of Reynoldsburg Parks & Recreation Department reserves the right to modify any rule as deemed necessary.**

A. 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.
2. The winner of the coin toss gets first offense possession. The loser of the coin toss chooses the end zone it would prefer to defend. Teams may not choose to defer to second half choice.
3. Referees will check every players equipment before games (mouthpiece , flags, cleats, etc.)
4. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has three (3) plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three (3) plays to score a touchdown.
5. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on its 5-yard line.
6. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its 5-yard line.
7. All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yard line.
8. Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the loser of the coin toss.

B. TERMINOLOGY

1. Boundary lines — the outer perimeter lines around the field. They include the sidelines, and the rear end zones lines.
2. Line of Scrimmage — the line running through the point of the football and across the width of the field that will be marked with flag/cone by the sideline official.
3. Line-to-Gain — the line the offense must pass to get a first down or score.
4. Rush Line — an imaginary line running across the width of the field 7 yards (into the defensive side) from the Line of Scrimmage.
5. Offense — the squad with possession of the ball.
6. Defense — the squad opposing the offense to prevent them from advancing the ball.
7. Quarterback — the offensive player that calls the signals to start the play.
8. Passer — the offensive player that throws the ball and may or may not be the QB.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. Dead Ball — refers to the period of time immediately before or after a play.
13. 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.
14. Inadvertent Whistle — official's whistle that is performed in error
15. 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.

16. 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.
17. 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
18. Lateral — a backwards or sideways toss of the ball by the ball carrier
19. Unsportsmanlike Conduct — a rude, confrontational, or offensive behavior or language.

C. EQUIPMENT

1. The Parks & Rec. Department provides each team an equipment bag including: footballs, flags & cones.
1. Players must wear shoes. Cleats are allowed, however cleats with exposed metal are not allowed and must be removed.
2. Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads, and kneepads. Braces with exposed metals are not allowed.
3. Players must remove all watches, earrings and any other jewelry that the officials deem hazardous.
4. We are aware that situations occur where a player doesn't have their jersey for a variety of reasons — if this occurs; please notify the field supervisor, referees, and opposing coach prior to game play so this issue can be worked out.
5. Pants or shorts with belt loops or pockets must be taped.
6. All players must wear a mouthpiece for all games & practices (required)
7. We want all of the participants to play, so we need to work together to make sure they have the opportunity to do so.

D. FIELD

1. The field dimensions are 60 yards by 25 yards with two 5-yard end zones, and a midfield line-to-gain. No-Run Zones precede each 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 marked 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 on 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 midfield to gain the first down, and one zone 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD).

E. ROSTERS

1. Teams will have at least (7) players on their roster team roster size may vary depending on registration numbers
2. Games will be played 7 v 7
3. Teams must have at least four players at the beginning of each game. Once the game begins, and if an injury occurs, teams can play with as few as three players on the field, but no fewer.

F. TIMING AND OVERTIME

1. Games consist of two (20) minute halves.
2. The clock stops during the last two minutes of each half for incomplete passes, out of bounds plays and two point conversions (regular HS Football playing rules)
3. Halftime is a maximum of (5) minutes but may be adjusted if games are running behind.
4. Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 25 seconds to snap the ball.
 - o For the first (2) games of the season in all divisions, teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced
 - o For every game after that, teams will no longer receive a warning and the penalty will be enforced
5. Each team has two (1) minute time outs per game to use. Timeouts do not carry over into OT. Teams will be issued one (1) minute time out per OT (playoffs only).
6. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.

7. In the event of an injury, the clock will stop and then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play
8. If the score is tied at the end of 40 minutes, the game should be determined a tie. In the playoffs, games will NOT end in a tie.

G. SCORING

1. Touchdown: 6 Points
2. PAT (Point After Touchdown): 1 Point (5-yard line) or 2 Points (10-yard line)
3. Safety: 2 points
4. A Safety occurs when the ball carrier is declared down in his/her own end zone. They can be called down when their flags are pulled by a defensive player, their flag falls, out the step out of bounds or they hit the ground with their knee or arm.
5. A Safety also occurs when there is an offensive penalty in the end zone.
6. A Safety also occurs when the center snaps the ball to the quarterback, who touches the ball, and the ball lands in the end zone prior to a player gaining possession of it.
7. A Safety is NOT called if the center snaps the ball to the quarterback and the quarterback does NOT touch the ball prior to it landing in the end zone. The penalty will result in the ball being placed half the distance to the end zone from the previous line of scrimmage.

H. 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 zone 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 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. The defense may not mimic the offensive team signals, by trying to confuse the offensive players, while the quarterback is calling out signals to start the play. This will result in an unsportsmanlike penalty.
5. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
6. Any official can whistle the play dead.
7. Play is ruled "dead" when:
 - i. The ball hits the ground.
 - ii. The ball carrier's flag is pulled.
 - iii. The ball carrier steps out of bounds.
 - iv. A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored.
 - v. The ball carrier's knee or arm hits the ground.
 - vi. The ball carrier's flag falls out,
 - vii. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one or no flag(s).
 - viii. The 7-second pass clock expires.
 - ix. Inadvertent whistle.
8. In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has two options:
 - i. Take the ball where it was when the whistle blew and the down is consumed.
 - ii. Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.

I. 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. If one foot precedes the other, the forward foot marks the spot.
2. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball.
3. Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Offense may use multiple handoffs.
4. Absolutely NO downfield laterals or pitches of any kind.
5. "No-Run Zones", Located 5 yards before each end zone and 5 yards on either side of midfield, are designed to avoid short-yardage, power-running situations. Teams are not allowed to run in these zones. IF the subsequent line is LIVE. (Reminder: Each offensive squad approaches only TWO No Run Zones in each drive — one 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down, one 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD 5 yards).
6. The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the LOS.

7. Once the ball has been handed off in front or behind the quarterback, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
8. Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a flag pull.
9. 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. Otherwise, runners may not leave their feet for any reason (i.e. – diving, leaping, jumping will be considered flag guarding).
10. No blocking or "screening" is allowed at any time.
11. Offensive players must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the LOS. No running with the ball carrier.
12. Flag Obstruction —All jerseys MUST be tucked in before play begins. The flags must be on the player's hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.

J. PASSING

1. All passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage
2. Shovel passes are allowed, but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
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.
4. 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).

K. 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 at the point of interception. Interceptions are the only changes of possession that do not start on the 5-yard line.
6. Interceptions are returnable.

L. RUSHING THE PASSER

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. The "down-field" referee will be the designated Rush Line seven yards from the LOS. Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play,
4. A legal rush is:
 - i. Any rush from a point 7-yards from the defensive line of scrimmage.
 - ii. A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off by the quarterback.
 - iii. If a rusher leaves the rush line early, they may return to the rush line, reset and then legally rush the quarterback.
 - iv. If a rusher leaves the rush line early and the ball is handed off before they cross the line of scrimmage, they may legally rush the quarterback.
5. A penalty may be called if
 - i. The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap and crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff or pass — Illegal Rush
 - ii. Any defensive player crosses the LOS before the ball is snapped
 - iii. Any defensive player; not lined up at the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passes or handed

6. Players rushing the Quarterback may attempt to block a pass. However; NO contact can be made with the Quarterback in any way.
7. Offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has a CLEAR PATH to the QB and any interference that would impede his/her path to the QB will be considered screening/blocking. The defense may attempt to block a pass provided they do not strike the passer.
8. Blocking the pass and then striking the passer will result in a penalty being called (5 yards and First Down).
9. A Sack occurs if the QB's flags are pulled behind the LOS. The ball is placed where the QB's feet are when the flag is pulled.
10. A Safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team's end zone.
11. If a team is up by 20 points or more, they are no longer permitted to rush the passer (mercy rule)
12. The player receiving the snap is eligible to run when the rusher crosses the line of scrimmage

M. 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 or pull from the ball 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 defenders access to the flags by stiff-arming, dropping of the head, hand, arm or shoulder, or intentionally covering flags with the football or jersey.

N. FORMATIONS

1. An offensive team must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage (the Center) and up to four players on the line of scrimmage. The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.
 - o One player at a time may go in motion at least 1 -yard beyond and parallel to the line of scrimmage. I
 - o No motion is allowed towards 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 one 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.

O. PENALTIES

1. General:
2. The referee will call all penalties.
 - i. Referees determine incidental contact.
 - ii. All penalties will be assessed from the LOS
 - iii. Only the team captain or head coach may ask the referee questions about the rule clarification and interpretations. Players cannot question judgment calls.
 - iv. Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.
 - v. Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal line if the distance to the goal line is less than the penalty yardage.
3. Spot Fouls:
 - i. Defensive Pass Interference - Automatic First Down
 - ii. Holding - Automatic First Down
 - iii. Defensive Unnecessary Roughness - 10 yards & automatic first down
 - iv. Screening/Blocking/Running w/ Ball Carrier - 10 yards & loss of down
 - v. Charging - 10 yards & loss of down

- vi. Flag Guarding - 10 yards & loss of down
- vii. Offensive Unnecessary Roughness - 10 yards & loss of down
- 4. Defensive Penalties:
 - i. Offside: + 5 yards from L.O.S. & automatic first down
 - ii. Illegal Rush (Starting rush from inside 7-yard marker): + 5 yards from L.O.S. & Automatic First Down
 - iii. Illegal Flag Pull (Before the receiver has the ball): + 5 yards from L.O.S. & Automatic First Down
 - iv. Roughing the Passer: + 10 yards from L.O.S. & Automatic First Down
 - v. Taunting: + 10 yards from L.O.S. & Automatic First Down
 - vi. Defensive Pass Interference: SPOT FOUL & Automatic First Down
 - vii. Holding: 10 yards & Automatic First Down
 - viii. Defensive Unnecessary Roughness: 10 yards & Automatic First Down
- 5. Offensive Penalties:
 - i. Offside/False Start - 5 yards from L.O.S. & loss of down
 - ii. Illegal Forward Pass (Pass received behind the line of scrimmage or throwing a pass beyond the line of scrimmage) - 5 yards from L.O.S. & Loss of Down
 - iii. Offensive Pass Interference - 5 yards from L.O.S. & loss of down
 - iv. Illegal Motion (more than one person moving) - 5 yards from L.O.S. & loss of down
 - v. Delay of Game - 5 yards from L.O.S. & loss of down
 - vi. Impeding the Rusher - 5 yards from L.O.S. & loss of down Screening/Blocking/Running with the Ball Carrier - 5 yards from L.O.S. & loss of down
 - vii. Charging: SPOT FOUL, - 10 yards, loss of down
 - viii. Flag Guarding: SPOT FOUL, - 10 yards, loss of down
 - ix. Offensive Unnecessary Roughness: SPOT FOUL, - 10 yards, loss of down

P. OVERTIME

1. No OT periods will be played during regular season games
2. Playoff Games Only
3. Each team gets one series of up to three plays (possibly more pending penalty enforcement) starting from mid-field line ("First Down" marker).
 - i. First possession choice goes to winner of regulation coin toss.
 - ii. NO SUDDEN DEATH... Each team will get a possession
 - iii. Possessions alternate thereafter
 - iv. Beginning with the 2nd possession teams must throw the ball for a 2-point conversation
 - v. The game will end when the score is not tied after an each team possesses the ball in the same overtime

Q. MINIMUM PLAYING TIME REQUIREMENT

1. All players must play at least half of each game (regular season & playoffs)
2. Every player must be a starter on either offense or defense

R. ADDITIONAL RULES

1. 8U Division
 - i. Will use Pee Wee Size Football
 - ii. (1) coach can be on the field on both offense and defense but cannot interfere with the course of play
 - iii. Player will serve as QB (not a coach)
2. 10U Division
 - i. Will use JR size football
 - ii. (1) Coach can be on the field on both offense and defense but cannot interfere with the course of play. This will be for the first two games played of the regular season only.
3. 12U Division
 - i. Will use JR size football

S. PLAYER/COACH/FAN CONDUCT

1. Any referee's decision which involves judgment is final. No player or Coach shall object to any such judgment decision.
2. For non-judgment calls or rule applications, if there is reasonable doubt that a referee's decision may be in conflict with the rules, the Head Coach may, with permission from the referee and with current rules in hand, question a call or ruling. All disputes must be settled within 5 minutes. The referee's decision at the end of the 5 minutes IS FINAL. Protests are not allowed. The site supervisor may also assist in this process but the discussion is to be brief and the referee/site supervisor have the final ruling on all decisions.
3. **Games may not be put under protest for any reason.**
4. Referees will officiate all games. If for any reason a referee is not available, coaches or parents are to perform this function. This is in an emergency case only and we will look to avoid at all costs this scenario. .

H. EJECTIONS

1. Any player, coach, parent, or sponsor ejected from any league game must leave the complex and may not return until that person(s) have spoken directly with the Recreation Superintendent.
2. Disciplinary Actions may include any & all of the following depending on the situation:
 - i. Verbal Warning
 - ii. Written Warning
 - iii. One (1) game suspension
 - iv. Two (2) game suspension
 - v. Removal from the league
 - vi. Banned from all Parks & Recreation Youth Sports Leagues/programs
3. Any player, coach, or sponsor ejected from any league game is subject to a minimum of (1) league game suspension and/or removal from league.
4. Any player, coach, or sponsor on suspension is not allowed at the field for practices and/or games until suspension is over.
5. Any suspension that occurs will carry over into post-season play.

I. FACILITY RULES & CONDUCT

1. There will be NO tobacco use on the field or anywhere in the park. Spectators are not allowed to smoke in the stands, around other spectators and/or near the fields (City Ordinance 971.23)
2. Teams are required to wear the uniforms provided by the Reynoldsburg Parks & Recreation Department. Uniforms CANNOT be altered (i.e. cutting sleeves, cutting the neck out, adding beads, etc.)
3. The official ball will be determined by the Reynoldsburg Parks and Recreation Department for league play.
4. The head coach is responsible for the conduct of his/her: team, assistant coach(s), and spectators.

Weather Hotline: 614.322.6834