



## YSC SPORTS / NFL FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

### CLOCK & GAME:

- All divisions will play 7v7 on both indoor and outdoor turf fields.
- If a team only has 6 players present, the opposing team must play 6v6. Teams that are short may play 5v6, but a team will not be forced to drop below 5 players.
- Two 20-minute halves with running clock (1-minute half time).
- Coin toss determines who begins with ball at beginning of game, other team starts 2<sup>nd</sup> half.
- Each team will have two 30-second timeouts per game (a timeout will reset the play clock).
- 40-second play clock (kept by the referee).
- 30-second P.A.T. play clock.
- Team should take separate sidelines (outdoor fields), or separate player boxes (indoor fields).
- The home team should wear dark colored jerseys – the visiting team should wear light colored jerseys.
- Coaches for Kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade are encouraged to be on the field to help their team on either Offense or Defense, but must be sure to stay out of the play and let players play.
  - If a coach gets in the way, they will be warned ONCE, any subsequent interference with play will require the defensive coach to be removed from the field for the rest of the game.
  - Coaches are not allowed to call out opponents plays or assist players in that capacity. Coaches will be warned once, then assessed an unsportsmanlike penalty.
- Grades 4-8 defensive coaches will remain on sidelines once a possession begins in order to be out of the way and provide more opportunity for the players to take leadership roles. One offensive coach may stay on the field to huddle and call plays.
  - Clock will stop at 1-minute left in the game if the game is within 2 scores on incomplete pass, out of bounds, penalties, TD, and change of possession.
  - There is no overtime in the regular season. Games may end in a tie.

### BALL MOVEMENT:

- Offense begins on 5-yard line as marked by Official.
- Center starts offense by snapping the ball to QB (snap doesn't need to be through legs, but ball must be on the ground when starting).
- The offensive team must have a minimum of 2 players on the line of scrimmage at the snap. The players do not have to be "lineman" (i.e. guard, center, etc), but they must be on the Line of Scrimmage (LOS) anywhere along the line.
- 1 player may be in motion, but they do not count as a player on the line.
  - Team has 3 plays to cross mid-field for 1<sup>st</sup> down, and 3 plays to score (\*K-1 division has 4 downs).
    - After 3<sup>rd</sup> down, if the offensive team has not reached mid-field or scored a TD, the opposing team gets the ball on their 5-yard line. There is no punting.
- If the ball is intercepted, offense is spotted at end of return and offense is started.
- NO FUMBLE RECOVERIES—ball is dead on contact with turf. If snap is fumbled, ONLY the QB can pickup and resume play.
- Play is dead when ball carrier's flag is pulled or knees / elbows / shoulder, etc. make contact with the ground.
- Spot of the ball is the player's entire body / hips, NOT football – reaching ball over goal line is not a TD – the player MUST cross the goal line / 1<sup>st</sup> down with hips / whole body.
  - QB has 7 seconds to throw the ball unless blitzed. After 7 seconds the play is blown and the down is lost
- Referee will count the seconds out loud.
- QB may only run the ball when he is blitzed and only after blitzer crosses the LOS.

## **RUNNING / RECEIVING:**

- Set screens (picks) are allowed - there is NO blocking. An offensive player must not move feet or extend arms / legs to impede the defense. Offense may run down field, but if contact is made with defense, they may be called with a moving pick and illegal block.
  - It is best for offensive players to get down field and hold position to avoid penalty.
  - Setting intentionally rough, blind screens may be grounds for unsportsmanlike penalty at the referee's discretion.
- A completed pass is when a player comes down with the ball in bounds with 1 foot touching in bounds (College Rules).
- Laterals and pitches are allowed (must not be forward).
- Everyone is an eligible receiver.
- Ball carriers may not jump through a flag pull while carrying the ball – will be immediately blown dead if referee rules that a jumping action to avoid flag pull took place.
- NO diving / jumping / hurdling while carrying the football. Play will be blown dead at spot of jump. Lateral cuts are okay.
- NO FLAG GUARDING! Any action to impede the defense to pull a flag is prohibited (i.e. running with arms in way of flags, blocking or swiping at defenders hands, and stiff arming).

## **NO-RUN-ZONE:**

- Offense may not run the ball within 5-yards of midfield and 5-yards of end zone unless QB is blitzed.
  - Referee will inform both coaches when the play is in the no-run-zone
- Team may NOT use a running back / wide receiver pass in the no-run-zone. QB must keep the ball and pass
  - If ball is handed off or pitches, play should immediately be blown dead and play is over.
- The QB must pass the ball across the line of scrimmage when in the no-run-zone.
  - No screens / shovels behind the LOS to satisfy a pass in the no-run-zone, must be forward.

## **DEFENSE:**

- Defense may only blitz once per every 3-down series. \*(K-1<sup>st</sup> Grade may only blitz once every 4-downs).
- The blitz must start 7-yards away off-of the LOS. Referee will mark the blitzing line with a bean bag – it extends cross-field.
- Rush can come from anywhere on the field behind the line, as long as the player check with ref prior to the play if rushing from a corner or defensive backfield position.
  - Blitzer may rush once the ball is snapped.
- Defense may cross the LOS on a hand-off / pitch, but must wait until the ball changes possession (unless blitzing).
- For K-1 only – Defense will start with a 3-yard buffer off-of the LOS until the ball is snapped, the referee will do their best to enforce this, but coaches should help with this as well. This will help keep cluster off the LOS and players stepping into the backfield before the ball is snapped or handed off.

## **FLAG PULLING:**

- Player is ruled “down” when one flag is pulled. Spot of the ball is player’s entire body / flags / hips – NOT ball.
- After pulling a flag, defender should raise the flag above his head to help referee see the spot.
- Defender should drop flag on the spot or hand flag back to ball carrier after pull.
- If flag falls out, or player starts play without a flag, player is still eligible of possession of ball but will be down with 1-hand touch.
- A defensive player shall not hold, grasp, or obstruct the forward progress of the running when attempting to remove the flag.
  - Both the ball carrier and flag puller must make efforts to avoid direct body contact or impeding forward progress.
  - Intentionally grabbing the ball carrier’s clothing or body will result in a penalty added onto the end of the play.
  - Defensive players must always make an effort to pull the flag. Players may NOT blatantly force a player out-of-bounds.
  - Clear Path Rule: if a player is pushed out-of-bounds, held, tackled, etc. by the last line of defense to prevent a TD, the play will be ruled as a TD. This will be ruled at the referee’s discretion based on intent of the play.
- Any player pursuing a running or throwing QB may only pull flags. No contact incidental or otherwise is allowed.

## **KICKING:**

- There is no kicking in the game.

### **SCORING:**

- 6 points for a TD
- 2 points for a safety
- 1 point for conversion after TD, ball is spotted on 4-yard line
- Interceptions may be returned for 1-point. Defense may blitz, but if a player chooses to blitz, the QB is allowed to run.
- The ball must be passed inside the no-run-zone unless blitzed
- 2 point conversion after TD, ball is spotted on the 7-yard line
- Team may run or pass, interceptions may be returned for 2 points and defense may send a blitz

### **SPORTSMANSHIP RULES:**

- If a team takes a 21-point lead the following rules go into place:
  - Team that is leading may no longer blitz
  - All scoring will be recorded on the referee's card, but wins will only be recorded with a margin of 21-points in order to discourage teams from intentionally running up the score.

### **PENALTIES:**

- Offside: 5-yards or half the distance\* - replay down.
- Defensive Holding / Obstruction of Forward Progress on a Ball Carrier: 5-yards from spot of foul or half the distance\* – 1<sup>st</sup> down.
- Delay of Game: 5-yards or half the distance\*
- Illegal Blocks: extending arms to block or setting a moving screen – spot of the ball at the spot of the foul, loss of down.
- Offset Penalties: replay down
- Illegal Rush: (starting rush early, or inside 7-yard marker) – 5-yards and replay down.
- Illegal Forward Pass: 5-yards and loss of down
- Illegal Motion: (more than 1 person moving or false start) – 5-yards and replay down (will be lenient with K-1 division).
- Flag Guarding: (any action player takes to guard flag – arm in the way, stiff arm, swiping hand, etc.) – 5-yards or half the distance\*
- Offensive Pass Interference: 10-yards from original spot, loss of down
- Defensive Pass Interference: 10-yards from original spot, automatic 1st down
- Illegal Contact with Passer: 10-yards from original spot, automatic 1st down
- Unnecessary Roughness / Unsportsmanlike Conduct / Personal Foul:
  - Defense: 15-yards, automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down
  - Offense: 15-yards, loss of down
  - *Player assessed the foul may be subject to removal from the game for the remainder of the half or longer at the referees sole discretion based on the severity of the incident.*
- Acts of deliberate tackling, cheap shots, or an unsportsmanlike act will not be tolerated. Player may be ejected from the game and will receive an unsportsmanlike penalty at the sole discretion of the referee.
  - Depending on severity of the act, the player may be subject to suspension or expulsion from the league without refund.
- Any player instigating or encouraging a fight, taunting or throwing a punch / kick, etc. will be immediately removed from the game and may be subject to further disciplinary action at the sole discretion of the league director.
- If any player, coach, parent, or spectator sees or hears something that is unsafe, please report this matter to a facility staff member immediately.

*\*Half the Distance: Is half the distance to the goal line or to 1<sup>st</sup> down line.*