

2025 Frederick County Parks & Recreation
Youth/Teen Flag Football
League Rules

Rules

1. The team listed second on the schedule will be the home team. The visiting team will receive the first possession.
2. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four (4) plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has four (4) 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.
3. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its 5-yard line.
4. All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yard line. Interceptions CAN be returned.
5. Interceptions made in end zone will start at 5-yard line if player downs the ball. If the player making the interception leaves the endzone with the entire body out of the endzone, it is a live ball.
6. There are no kickoffs or punts. **Absolutely, no blocking or running to get in the way is allowed!**
7. In the 2nd/3rd Grade and 4th/5th Grade divisions, a maximum of 1 coach is allowed on the field throughout the game on offensive and defensive possessions.
8. In the Middle School division, no coaches are allowed on the field at any time.

Players

1. Teams must field a minimum of (6) players at all times.
2. All players must play at least half of a game or 20 minutes.
3. Players' jerseys must be tucked into shorts or pants if they hang below the belt line.

Timing/Overtime

1. Games are 40 minutes running clock. There will be two (2) 20-minute halves with a 5-minute halftime. The clock will stop on dead balls during the last minute of each half.
2. The huddle clock is 30 seconds. Each time the ball is spotted, a team has up to 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.
3. Each team has two (2), 45 second timeouts per half.
4. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
5. In the event a game ends in a tie, each team will have 4 plays from the 10-yard line. Only one overtime period will be permitted. If a winner is not determined after first overtime, then the game will result in a tie. Playoff games will continue until a winner is determined.

Scoring

Touchdown: 6 points
Extra point: 1 point (from the 5-yard line)
 2 points (from the 10-yard line)
Safety: 2 points

Running

1. The Quarterback CAN ONLY run with the ball down field IF there is a rusher. **** (2nd/3rd grade division – no QB runs or rushing allowed)****
 1. This includes inside the 5-yard zone. Again, ONLY if being rushed.
2. Direct hand offs, pitches, Screen passes and laterals are allowed behind the line of scrimmage only! Offense may use multiple hand offs.
3. NO pitches or laterals are allowed down field or past the line of scrimmage.
4. “NO running zones,” located 5 yards from each end zone and 5 yards on either side of midfield are designed to avoid short-yardage, power-running situations. Passing must be used in the no running zones. (All passes must be forward passes, no screens behind line of scrimmage)
5. The player who takes the hand off can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
6. Once the ball has been handed off, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
7. Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a defensive player (**no diving**). If this happens, the ball will be spotted where the player left his/her feet.
8. The ball is spotted where the ball carrier’s feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.
9. The Center sneak play or any variation of this play is not allowed.

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. As in the NFL, only one player is allowed in motion at a time. A player must be set for 1 second before a second player can be in motion.

Ball Carrier

1. The ball carrier **cannot use his/her hands or arms to guard their flags**. A ball carrier also **cannot lower his/her upper body in an attempt to guard their flags**. The defensive player must have every opportunity to remove the ball carrier’s flag. Violation will be considered flag-guarding.
2. The ball carrier cannot lower his head to drive or run into a defensive player. This will be considered charging and a penalty will be given. Make sure the player is moving around the defender.
3. **Stiff-arming by the ball carrier is illegal.**

Passing

1. The quarterback has a seven (7)-second “pass clock.” If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, play is dead, loss of down. Once the ball is handed off, the seven-second rule is no longer in effect.
2. Interceptions are returnable. Interceptions downed in the endzone will go out to the 5-yard line.

Dead Balls

1. In the 4th/5th division, players have the option of a side snap or regular between the legs snap to start each play. In the Middle School division, players must use the between the legs snap to start each play. Both divisions will have a center that makes the snap. The 2nd-3rd grade division will not use a center to snap the ball.
2. Each play will start with the following cadence: “Down, Set, Hut!” That will be used by all teams.
3. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
4. 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 flag falls out.
 - * Incomplete Pass.
 - ** There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground.

Rushing the Passer/Defensive Players

1. All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. **(2nd/3rd grade division – no rushing allowed)**
2. Only one designated player may rush the quarterback. Jumping the rush (leaving early) is not a penalty until the rusher crosses the line of scrimmage prior to the handoff or passed ball.
3. Once the ball is handed off, the seven-yard rule is no longer in effect, and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
4. The referee will designate, with a towel, seven yards from the line of scrimmage.
5. **NO blocking of ball or tackling is allowed!**
6. No Defensive player may dive.
7. The person rushing the quarterback may jump and put hands up to tip a pass. Contacting the quarterback will result in a penalty.

Equipment:

1. Cleats are allowed, metal or metal tipped cleats are prohibited.
2. **All players must wear a mouthpiece.**
3. No protective padding which may injure another player.
4. Footballs and flags will be provided by FCPRD.
5. All jerseys must be tucked in
6. No jewelry is allowed.
7. No casts or splints, no matter how well padded it is.
8. Glasses may be worn, but players must use a safety strap.

Penalties

Defense:

Offsides:	5 yards
Diving:	5 yards
Pass Interference:	10 yards and automatic first down
Illegal contact:	5 yards and automatic first down (<i>holding, blocking, tackling, etc.</i>)
Illegal flag pull:	5 yards and automatic first down (<i>before receiver has the ball</i>)
Illegal rushing:	5 yards and automatic first down (<i>starting rush from inside 7-yard marker or continuing to rush after leaving early</i>)
Rusher contact w/ QB:	5 yards and automatic first down

Offense:

Illegal motion:	5 yards, <u>NO</u> loss of down (<i>more than one person moving, false start, etc.</i>)
Delay of Game:	Clock stops, 5 yards, <u>NO</u> loss of down
Illegal forward pass:	5 yards and loss of down
Pass interference:	10 yards and loss of down (<i>illegal pick play, pushing off, etc.</i>)
Flag guarding:	5 yards from spot of foul and loss of down
Charging:	5 yards and loss of down
Screening/Blocking:	5 yards and loss of down

1. All penalties will be called by the referees
2. Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage.
3. Only the team captain may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players cannot question calls.
4. Games cannot end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.
5. Unnecessary Roughness/Personal foul penalties will be 15 yards and loss of down (offense) or automatic first down (defense).
6. Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.
7. Spot fouls in end zone: Defensive (Ball on one-yard line, first down)/Offensive (Safety)

Sportsmanship / Conduct

Any player or coach is subject to ejection from a game for fighting, obscene language, or intentionally roughing a player.

All Coaches (Head Coaches and Assistant Coaches) will be expected to follow the guidelines below at all practices, games, and any activities related to the flag football program. Any coach is subject to removal by FCPRD for violation of these rules:

- a. **Coaches will not** criticize players!
- b. **Coaches will** accept decisions of game officials on the field as being fair and called to the best of their ability! This is very important because it sets the example for the players and spectators to follow. **Officials are there to improve the quality of the program.**
- c. **Coaches will not** criticize an opposing team's players, coaches, or fans by word of mouth or by gesture.
- d. **Coaches will not** use excessive sideline coaching, (i.e. screaming, hollering, etc.)
- e. **Coaches will** work together with the game officials to be jointly responsible for the conduct and control of the team's fans and spectators.
- f. **Coaches will not** use abusive and profane language at games or practices.
- g. **Coaches will not** permit an ineligible player (one who is not registered, etc.) to participate in games or practices.
- h. **All coaches must be approved by FCPRD.** Anyone who is not approved by FCPRD will not be allowed with the players at practices or games. Background checks must be completed, and a badge must be issued before any coach is approved to coach.
- i. **Coaches will not** deliberately incite unsportsmanlike conduct.
- j. **Coaches will abstain** from drinking alcoholic beverages or using tobacco products at practices, games, and all related activities.