



## **Flag Football Rulebook**

### **Revision 4**

*Mission Statement: "We will provide the most comprehensive and affordable youth sports league focusing on the family's needs and positive experiences"*

# Flag Football Rulebook- Revision 4

## Safety/Sportsmanship

This league is intended to teach children the sport of football while conveying the importance of sportsmanship, attention, and effort. Safety is the **HIGHEST PRIORITY** at all times. Everyone is in charge of safety, no one will be permitted to play if there is a safety or health concern. At no time will winning come before the safety of anyone. The rules are meant to keep the game fun, exciting, and safe. Unequal playing time, poor sportsmanship, and offensive language will not be tolerated and should be reported to staff immediately. **Trash talking and unsportsmanlike actions are strictly PROHIBITED.**

## Practice

- Practice starts one hour before the game (unless there is a double header in which there will be no practice)
- Coaches should practice basics and start each season as though every child is new
- No child will be withheld from practice because they were late or were absent in previous weeks
- Extra practices through the week are **NOT** permitted for any reason

## Games

- Games are 5 on 5 but can be played 4 on 4 if players are absent
- A player can only be on the roster for one team per division
- No player will be withheld from the game because of lateness/absence
- Each child should get a chance to play every position
- Only head coaches should approach a referee, arguing judgement calls is prohibited

## Before/After Activities

- Coaches must to arrive early before practice and have practice plans ready
- All teams must shake hands at the end of the game
- After activities are complete, children **MUST** leave with a parent or guardian
- Any child which does not have a parent/guardian present will be escorted to the staff tent
- At **NO TIME** will coaches be alone with any child other than their own
- At the end of each game, all balls will be returned to referees

## Weather

- Weather delays/cancellations can be found of the 4 Kids Youth Sports website/Facebook page
- On most instances, games that are canceled will be made up with a doubleheader or an extra week of games
- Every attempt will be made to play an entire season but seasons may be shortened based on field availability

## Jerseys/Equipment

- The away team wears the white side of their jersey, home team wears the color side
- It is recommended that pants/shorts **do not** have pockets

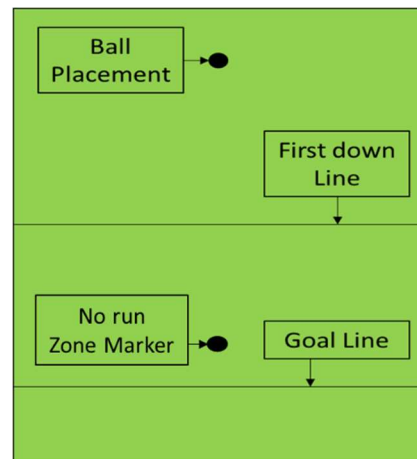
- Mouth guards are required at all times while on the field
- Coats must be worn under team jersey whenever possible
- Jerseys must be tucked in or flag guarding can be called
- Flags are to be worn on the hips (as close as possible to the colored stripe on the jersey) and inserted with the least force necessary
- No jewelry, except medial alert bracelets, is to be worn during practice/games (taping earrings is acceptable)
- Rubber cleats are permitted, although not required (no steel spikes allowed)

### Coaches

- All coaches must have completed the online volunteer application before coaching
- All coaches must have completed concussion training, and turned in the certificate, before being allowed to coach
- Coaches will have their official coach shirt on at all times while coaching
- Coaches are responsible for having a rule book
- Offensive coaches in the Pre-K to 4<sup>th</sup> grade leagues are permitted to stay on the field during play, approximately 5 yards behind the players
- Defensive coaches in all leagues must be on the sidelines before the play begins
- Only one coach allowed on the field at any time
- Coaches are NOT allowed to engage in any conversation with anyone on the opposite sidelines (subject to objection)

### Field Layout

- The ball will be placed on the ball placement spot at the start of the drive
- The ball will never be placed further back than this spot, even in there is a sack or dropped ball
- The field will be roughly 25 yards across by 60 yards long with 10 yards behind the ball placement line, 10 yard end zone, and the first down line 20 yards from the ball placement mark
- The no run zone marker is where the ball will be placed for all extra point attempts, 5 yards from goal line.



### Game Play

- The game begins with a meeting of team captains and head coach with the referee
- The away team starts with the ball, the home team receives ball after halftime
- The ball is always spotted at the center of the field laterally to where the players flag was pulled
- A half cannot end on a defensive penalty

### First Downs

- Each team has 4 downs to reach the first down line

- On fourth down, the team can give the ball back to the other team, placing the ball at the ball placement mark, or go for a first down:
  - If they make it across the first down line, then they have 4 new downs to get a touchdown
  - If they fail to make it across the first down line, then the ball is placed wherever their flag was pulled on fourth down and possession goes to the other team
- Once across the first down line, teams have 4 downs to make a touchdown.
  - If the team fails to score a touchdown after four downs, the ball goes back to the other team at the ball placement mark.

### Scoring

- Touchdowns are worth 6 points
- A touchdown occurs when the ball passes the goal line **BEFORE** the player's flag is pulled (as judged by the referee alone)
- The ball is spotted at the No Run Zone marker for all extra point attempts, approximately 5 yards from the goal line
- A team that runs the ball into the end zone during their extra point attempt is awarded 1 point
- A team that completes a legal pass during their extra point attempt is awarded 2 points
- Offensive penalties during an extra point constitute a failed attempt while defensive penalties result in a re-attempt from the same spot
- Two consecutive defensive penalties results in offense being awarded with a completed attempt
- No safeties are awarded, even when a flag is pulled behind the ball placement marker, the ball is reset on the marker for the next play

### Time

- Practices are 1 hour long and precede the game
- The game consists of two 23-minute halves and a 5-minute halftime
- For doubleheaders **ONLY** the game consists of two 17-minute halves and a 5-minute halftime
- There is approximately a 40 second play clock once the ball is spotted.
- Each team gets one 60-second time out per half that does not roll over
- The clock only stops for timeouts or anytime the referees deems necessary during the game
- During the last two minutes of the game only, time stops for time outs, out of bounds, incomplete throws, and touchdowns (only if the game score is within 8 points)

### Offense

- It is the offensive players job to avoid contact
- Players are not allowed to block, screen or pick any defensive player
- The play must begin with a ball snapped between the centers legs, shotgun snaps are allowed
- Center sneaks are allowed **as long as** the ball is completely exchanged from the center to the QB
- Anytime a ball is dropped, it is considered dead, and the offense loses their down
- This rule is relaxed for snaps but will be in effect if drops are consecutive
- Only one player allowed in motion at a time and must be lateral to the line of scrimmage
- Any hidden ball tricks, where a team bunches up in an attempt to hide the ball, are not allowed

## Running

- The same player is not allowed to carry the ball past the line of scrimmage on consecutive plays
- Players are not allowed to hurdle, run over, lower their shoulder, or make any type of intentional contact
- Only handoffs and backward/lateral pitches behind the line of scrimmage are legal, no handoffs, laterals, or pitches past the line of scrimmage
- Anyone can receive a handoff, including the center and quarterback, permitted they have not passed the line of scrimmage
- The quarterback cannot run the ball passed the line of scrimmage unless they have exchanged the ball with another player and the ball was given back to them
- Any player can throw the ball as long as they have not passed the line of scrimmage

## Passing

- The quarterback has 7 seconds to pass the ball
- If the ball is not thrown by that time, the play is blown dead and the offense loses the down
- Once the ball is handed off the clock is no longer in effect (defenders can then rush)
- All passes must be thrown from behind the line of scrimmage and to a player that is beyond the line of scrimmage
- No backwards passes

## Receiving

- Any player can receive a pass as long as they are beyond the line of scrimmage
- They must have at least one foot in bounds
- If a receiver's flag falls off before they catch a pass, they are down where it is caught
- If a receiver's flag is pulled before they catch a pass, that is a defensive penalty
- If both a defender and receiver catch the ball at the same time, the tie goes to the receiver

## Defense

- Defenders cannot run into, block, or intentionally contact a player in any way
- Inadvertent contact is understood but multiple violations by the same player will result in a penalty
- Defenders cannot pass the line of scrimmage until the ball is handed off (no rushing the QB)
- Defenders must go after flags, not players
- If a defender inadvertently grabs clothing while reaching for a flag, they must let go immediately
- If a flag is removed while the defender is grabbing a players clothing, it will be a penalty
- Defense must start 1 yard off the line of scrimmage
- Players cannot attempt to strip a ball out of a players possession
- Defenders may not remove the flag of a player who is not in possession of the ball

## Flag Pulling/Guarding

- Flag guarding is called when the runner holds onto their flag, slaps a defender's hand, stiff arms, or initiates contact with a defender

- Flag guarding can also be called when a jersey is not tucked in

### **Interceptions/Fumbles**

- When a defender intercepts a ball, the play becomes dead, and the defense gets the ball at the ball placement mark
- There are no fumbles, when a ball is dropped, play is blown dead as if a flag was pulled

### **No Run Zone**

- When the offense passes the no run zone marker, they must attempt a pass
- Divisions from Pre-K to 4<sup>th</sup> grade are allowed to run on all parts of the field
- All extra points take place at the no run zone marker, making run plays legal
- When divisions are combined with players from above and below the 4<sup>th</sup> grade line, they will be allowed to run within the no run zone

### **Penalties**

- Penalties can be declined:

#### Offense- 5-yard penalty from line of scrimmage and replay down

- False start
- Illegal motion
- Delay of game
- Illegal hand off
- Too many players on field
- Offensive pass interference
- Illegal forward pass

#### Offense- 5-yard penalty from spot of foul continue to next down

- Flag guarding
- Intentional contact

#### Defense- 5-yard penalty from line of scrimmage and replay down

- Off sides
- Illegal rushing
- Too many players on field

#### Defense- 5-yard penalty from spot of foul and replay down

- Attempting to strip ball from runner
- Pass interference
- Grabbing clothes of offensive runner and removing flag before letting go
- Removing a receiver's flag before they catch a ball
- Intentional contact

#### Unsportsmanlike conduct- Warning, next offense is automatic ejection

- Cussing
- Arguing with officials
- Anything deemed inappropriate by official or staff
- Talking with opposite sideline

### **Overtime**

- There is no overtime in regular season games
- Tied games will end at their regular time
- During bowl games, overtime starts with the away team on offense
- Each team will get 2 downs to make the most yards from the ball placement marker
- The team that gets the most yards wins the game
- If a team scores a touchdown on either of their downs, they attempt an extra point like normal
- If both teams end up with the same amount of yards/points after one possession, they restart the process with the home team on offense, alternating until one team wins

### **Mercy**

- Mercy rules are to be avoided as much as possible
- Mercy rules come into effect when one team goes up by more than 24 points
- The defense of the winning team will play with one less player
- The defense of the losing team will play with one extra player
- The game will be ended if the winning team goes up by more than 35 points

### **Forfeits**

- Forfeits are to be avoided at all costs
- Teams showing more than 10 minutes late will forfeit the game but the game can still be played as a scrimmage
- Teams with 3 or less players will forfeit the game but can still borrow players from the other team to complete the game as a scrimmage

### **Protest**

- A coach can protest rule enforcement, not judgement calls
- All judgement calls will be made by referees
- A coach can protest the enforcement of a rule by calling a protest timeout
- A staff member will be called to determine if the rule was enforced correctly
- If the rule was not enforced correctly, the issue will be corrected and, if deemed appropriate, the play will be redone
- Each team gets one protest time out per half that does not roll over

### **Ejections**

- Anyone who continually argues, uses profanity, threatens, or does anything deemed unsportsmanlike towards anyone else will be warned and subject to ejection
- Those who are ejected will be asked to leave the field
- The field is private property and anyone who does not leave will be **TRESSPASSING**

- They must contact 4 Kids Youth Sports staff with a written apology and guarantee that the actions will not happen again before they will be permitted to return the following week
- Multiple ejections will result in the removal from the league with no refunds given
- Anyone tampering with equipment will also result in a warning and be subject to ejection
- Anyone caught defacing property will be removed from the league without a refund

### **Parents**

- Spectators are never to be within 5 feet of the sidelines
- Parents are NOT allowed to engage with referees, opposing coaches, or opposing players at any time
- Any issues a parent has should be brought to the attention of 4 Kids staff
- **It is a parent's job to motivate, encourage, and support their player!**

4 Kids Youth Sports is dedicated to providing the best experience possible for everyone. These rules are meant to keep the game fun, exciting, and safe. 4 Kids Youth Sports reserves the right to change the rules at any time to enhance any one of these three aspects.

Please direct any questions, concerns, or comments to Joel Seibel ([jseibel@4kidsyouthsports.com](mailto:jseibel@4kidsyouthsports.com))