

## **2023 LYSA Flag Football Rules**

### **General Rules**

1. July 1st of the current calendar year is the date used to determine eligibility for age divisions.
2. Only one head coach and two assistant coaches are allowed on the sidelines during games.
3. All team photographers, managers, position coaches, team moms, fans, etc., must remain a minimum of 10 yards off the field in a designated Spectator Viewing Area.
4. Teams must be standing near the end zone of the field for their games and be ready to play 10 minutes before the scheduled game time.
5. An LYSA medical release form, signed by a parent or legal guardian, is required.
6. No roster substitutions will be allowed after the final roster is submitted.

### **Rosters**

1. Team rosters must consist of at least 5 players with a maximum of 12 players.
  - a. Games will be played 5 on 5, and a minimum of 4 players must be on the field at all times. A player may only appear on one roster.
  - b. Teams will be granted a 10-minute grace period if they do not have at least 4 eligible players at the start of the game, to allow for the required players to report to the field.
  - c. In the event of an injury, a team with insufficient substitute players may play with 4 players on the field, but no fewer than 4.
  - d. If one team is short on players, the opposing team must reduce their players on the field to match.
  - e. Every player on a team's roster should be given the opportunity to play at least half of the game time.
2. All roster challenges will be addressed by LYSA either prior or post game play.
  - a. If a roster is ruled illegal, the team at fault will forfeit the game, awarding the other team a 28-0 victory.
  - b. If a roster is proven legal, the game will resume as scheduled or the score of the game will be recorded.

### **Game**

1. At the start of each game, captains from both teams meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who starts with the ball. The visiting team calls the toss.
2. The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense. The loser of the coin toss has the choice of direction. Possession changes to start the second half to the team that started the game on defense.

3. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has 3 downs to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has 4 downs to score a touchdown.
  - a. If the offensive team fails to score on 3 downs and elects to punt on 4th down, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its own 5-yard line. If the offensive team goes for it on 4th down and does not score, the opposing team will start its possession from the spot.
  - b. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts its drive on its own 5-yard line.
  - c. All possessions changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yard line.
4. Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.

## **Equipment**

1. Participants must bring their own mouth guards.
2. LYSA jerseys, flag belts and mouth guards must be worn at all times while on the playing fields.
3. Footballs will be provided. Team footballs are not allowed.
4. Players may wear tennis shoes or cleats. Cleats with exposed metal are never allowed and must be removed.
5. Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads and knee pads. Braces with exposed metals are not allowed.
6. Players must remove all jewelry and hats. Winter stocking hats are allowed.
7. Players may wear soft shell helmets, but they must be secured at all times while on the playing field.
8. Players' jerseys must be tucked into shorts or pants if they hang below the belt line.
9. We recommend players wear shorts or pants that do not have pockets. Shorts or pants with belt loops or pockets must be taped.
  - a. Flag belts cannot be the same color as shorts or pants.

## **Field**

1. The field dimensions are 25 yards by 70 yards, with two 10-yard end zones, and a midfield line-to-gain.
2. Stepping on the boundary line is considered out of bounds.

## **Timing and Overtime**

1. Games consist of two 20-minute halves with a five-minute halftime.
2. A continuous clock will be used except for the last one (1) minute of each half. Then the clock will be stopped on all dead ball situations. Clock stops only for half time, time outs, injuries and at the officials' discretion.
3. Each team is allowed one 60-second timeout per half. Timeouts do not carry over into

the second half.

4. Overtime rules for end of season tournament:
  - a. If the score is tied at the end of regulation, teams move directly into overtime.
  - b. All regulation rules will apply during overtime.
  - c. There are no time-outs.
  - d. Coin toss determines possession. The team that did not call the opening toss will call the overtime coin toss.
  - e. The team that receives the ball will start at the opposing team's 5-yard line. If the receiving team scores a touchdown during their initial possession the offensive team will have the opportunity to go for the extra point. After the extra point try, the new offensive team will take possession at the opposing team's 5-yard line (exception to this rule: interceptions will be played as they were in regulation). After both teams have had a possession in overtime, if the game is still tied, the next score wins.

## 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
  - a. A safety occurs when the ball carrier is declared down in his/her own end zone. Safety also occurs when there is an offensive penalty in the end zone.
  - b. The team that scored will then receive the ball on their 5-yard line.
4. A team that scores a touchdown must declare whether it wishes to attempt a 1 point conversion (from the 5-yard line) or a 2 point conversion (from the 10-yard line). Any change, once a decision is made to try for the extra point, requires a charged timeout. A decision cannot be changed after a penalty.

## 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.
  - a. It is an automatic dead 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 back behind the line of scrimmage.
3. A player who gains possession of the ball in the air is considered in bounds as long as the first foot or other body part contacts the ground 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 conduct penalty.
5. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
6. Any official can whistle the play dead.
7. Play is ruled "dead" when:

- a. The ball hits the ground.
- b. The ball-carrier's flag is pulled.
- c. The ball-carrier steps out of bounds.
- d. A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored.
- e. The ball-carrier's knee or arm hits the ground.
- f. The ball-carrier's flag falls out.
- g. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one or no flag(s).
- h. The 7 second pass clock expires.
- i. Inadvertent whistle.

**NOTE:** There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's feet were at the time of the fumble.

- 8. If inadvertent whistle occurs, the offense has two options:
  - a. Take the ball where the whistle blew and the down is consumed.
  - b. Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.
- 9. For end of season tournament only: A team is allowed to use a timeout to question an official's rule interpretation. If the official's ruling is correct, the team will be charged a timeout. If the rule is interpreted incorrectly, the timeout will not be charged and the proper ruling will be enforced. Officials should all agree upon any controversial call in order to give each team the full benefit of each call.

## **Running the Ball**

- 1. The ball is spotted where the runner's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball carrier has the ball. Forward progress will be measured by the player's front foot.
- 2. Direct handoffs, laterals, or pitches (player to player, hand to hand) behind the line of scrimmage are legal. Anyone behind the line of scrimmage can receive a handoff, lateral, or pitch.
- 3. There is no limit to the amount of direct handoffs, laterals, or pitches that can be performed by the offense in a single play, so long as the ball never crosses the line of scrimmage.
- 4. The QB can run the ball if he/she has first handed the ball off behind the line of scrimmage and then taken a direct handoff, lateral, or pitch back from another player before the ball has ever crossed the line of scrimmage. The QB can run if he/she is rushed, this includes the no-run zones.
- 5. The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball, as long as he or she does not pass the line of scrimmage.
- 6. It is the responsibility of the ball carrier to avoid colliding with defenders that lie in his/her path. Unintentional contact will not be penalized, provided the ball carrier makes an effort to avoid it. Failure to attempt to avoid contact with a defender (charging) may be

penalized. Intentional contact will not be tolerated, and may result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty, and/or player ejection.

7. "No-Run Zones," located 5 yards before each end zone and 5 yards on either side of midfield are designed to avoid short short-yardage power-running situations. Teams are not allowed to run in these zones if the subsequent line is LIVE.
8. Once the ball has been handed off in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
9. Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping, or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding.
10. Spinning is permitted.
11. 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.

## **Passing**

1. All passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward and received beyond 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 7 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.
  - a. a. 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.

## **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 and are down at the point of interception. Interceptions are the only changes of possession that do not start on the 5-yard line. (End zone interceptions- the ball is placed at the 5-yard line.)

## **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. A special marker, or the referee, will designate a Rush Line seven yards from the line of scrimmage. Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.
4. If the offense draws the rusher(s) to jump the seven-yard marker prior to the snap of the ball, that rusher(s) cannot rush during that play. However, any other defender that is seven yards back may rush instead.
5. The rusher must take an angled path to the QB. If this path is crossed and contact is made involving the rusher and any offensive player than an offensive impeding penalty will be assessed.
6. Once the rusher's angle is set, he/she cannot change their path to the QB. If the path is changed, they will lose the right of way privileges. This means that if any contact is made, it will be called against the initiating player.
7. The rusher may attempt to block the pass, but it is a penalty to make contact with the quarterback's arm.

### **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 from the ball-carrier's possession at any time.
4. If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during a play while that player has possession, the player is down immediately and the play ends. The ball is placed where the flag lands.
5. If a player who has one or no flags in their belt takes possession of the ball, the play is dead at that spot on the field.
6. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball.
7. Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball-carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the head, hand, arm or shoulder or intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey.

### **Formations**

1. Offense must have a minimum of one player and a maximum of four players on the line of scrimmage. The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.
  - a. One player at a time may go in motion 1-yard behind and parallel to the line of scrimmage.
  - b. No motion is allowed toward 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 only 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. Shotgun snaps are allowed. If unable to snap between his/her legs, the player is permitted to hike

the ball backwards from the side.

5. Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Each team will receive 1 warning per game before a Delay of Game penalty is called.
6. No blocking is allowed.

### **Unsportsmanlike Conduct**

1. If the field monitor or referee witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking, or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player may be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the referee's discretion. No appeals will be considered. *FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!*
2. Offensive or confrontational language is not allowed. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.
3. Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach, or official.
4. Ball-carriers **MUST** make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.
5. Defenders must give free releases off the line of scrimmage to offensive players and are not allowed to run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags. *ROUGH PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!*
6. Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship, as well:
  - a. Yell to cheer on your players, not to harass officials or other teams.
  - b. Keep comments clean and profanity free.
  - c. Compliment ALL players, not just one child or team.
7. Fans are required to keep fields safe and kids friendly:
  - a. Keep younger kids and equipment such as coolers, chairs and tents a minimum of 10 yards off the field. Keep fields clean of trash after games.

### **Penalties**

1. The referee will call all penalties.
2. Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
3. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted. (Spot fouls)
4. Only the head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players may not question calls.
5. Games or halves may not end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.
6. Penalties are assessed live ball then dead ball. Live ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered complete.
7. Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.

**Spot Fouls:**

<b>Holding</b>	<b>+ 5 yards &amp; Automatic First Down</b>
<b>Stripping</b>	<b>+ 10 yards &amp; Automatic First Down</b>
<b>Defensive Unnecessary Roughness</b>	<b>+ 10 yards &amp; Automatic First Down</b>
<b>Screening, Blocking or Running with the Ball Carrier</b>	<b>- 10 yards &amp; Loss of Down</b>
<b>Charging</b>	<b>- 10 yards &amp; Loss of Down</b>
<b>Flag Guarding</b>	<b>- 10 yards &amp; Loss of Down</b>
<b>Offensive Unnecessary Roughness</b>	<b>- 10 yards &amp; Loss of Down</b>

**Defensive Penalties:**

<b>Offside</b>	<b>+ 5 yards from line for scrimmage &amp; Automatic First Down</b>
<b>Illegal Rush (Starting rush from inside 7 yard marker)</b>	<b>+ 5 yards from line for scrimmage &amp; Automatic First Down</b>
<b>Illegal Flag Pull (Before the receiver has the ball)</b>	<b>+ 5 yards from line for scrimmage &amp; Automatic First Down</b>
<b>Coach Interference</b>	<b>+ 5 yards from line for scrimmage &amp; Automatic First Down</b>
<b>Roughing the Passer</b>	<b>+ 10 yards from line for scrimmage &amp; Automatic First Down</b>
<b>Taunting</b>	<b>+ 10 yards from line for scrimmage &amp; Automatic First Down</b>



<b>Defensive Pass Interference</b>	<b>Automatic First Down and +10 yards (if caught, the team can choose for it to be an automatic first down where the ball was caught)</b>
<b>Holding</b>	<b>SPOT FOUL, + 5 yards &amp; Automatic First Down</b>
<b>Stripping</b>	<b>SPOT FOUL, + 10 yards &amp; Automatic First Down</b>
<b>Defensive Unnecessary Roughness</b>	<b>SPOT FOUL, + 10 yards &amp; Automatic First Down</b>

#### **Offensive Penalties:**

<b>Offside / False Start</b>	<b>- 5 yards from line of scrimmage &amp; Loss of Down</b>
<b>Illegal Forward Pass</b> (Pass received behind the line of scrimmage or throwing a pass beyond the line of scrimmage)	<b>- 5 yards from line of scrimmage &amp; Loss of Down</b>
<b>Illegal Motion (More than one person moving)</b>	<b>- 5 yards from line of scrimmage &amp; Loss of Down</b>
<b>Delay of Game</b>	<b>- 5 yards from line of scrimmage &amp; Loss of Down</b>
<b>Impeding the Rusher</b>	<b>- 5 yards from line of scrimmage &amp; Loss of Down</b>
<b>Offensive Pass Interference</b>	<b>- 10 yards from line of scrimmage &amp; Loss of Down</b>
<b>Screening, Blocking or Running with the Ball Carrier</b>	<b>SPOT FOUL, - 5 yards &amp; Loss of Down</b>
<b>Charging</b>	<b>SPOT FOUL, - 10 yards &amp; Loss of Down</b>

<b>Flag Guarding</b>	<b>SPOT FOUL, - 10 yards &amp; Loss of Down</b>
<b>Offensive Unnecessary Roughness</b>	<b>SPOT FOUL, - 10 yards &amp; Loss of Down</b>

## Definitions

<b>Boundary Lines</b>	The outer perimeter lines around the field. They include the sidelines and back of the end zone lines.
<b>Line of Scrimmage</b>	(LOS) an imaginary line running through the point of the football and across the width of the field.
<b>Line-to-Gain</b>	The line the offense must pass to get a first down or score.
<b>Rush Line</b>	An imaginary line running across the width of the field 7 yards (into the defensive side) from the line of scrimmage.
<b>Offense</b>	The team with possession of the ball.
<b>Defense</b>	The team opposing the offense to prevent it from advancing the ball.
<b>Passer</b>	The offensive player that throws the ball and may or may not be the quarterback.
<b>Rusher</b>	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.
<b>Live Ball</b>	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.
<b>Dead Ball</b>	Refers to the period of time immediately before or after a play.
<b>Whistle</b>	Sound made by an official using a whistle that signifies the end of the play or a stop in the action for a timeout, halftime or the end of the game.
<b>Inadvertent Whistle</b>	Official's whistle that is performed in error.
<b>Charging</b>	An illegal movement of the ball-carrier directly at a defensive player who has established position on the field. This includes lowering the head or initiating contact with a shoulder, forearm or the chest.
<b>Flag Guarding</b>	An illegal 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, arm or ball.
<b>Shovel Pass</b>	A legal forward pass across the line of scrimmage underhand, backhand or by pushing the ball forward.
<b>Lateral</b>	A backward or sideways toss of the ball by the ball-carrier.

<b>Downs (1-2-3)</b>	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.
<b>Unsportsmanlike Conduct</b>	A rude, confrontational, or offensive behavior or language.