

# NCAA Flag Football Rules (Grades K – 8) – 2012

## **1) Players / Game Schedules**

- a) Games will start promptly at the top of the hour. Two 25 minute halves will be played with a 5 minute break at half time.
- b) Each team may have up to five players on the field at a time. Teams must field a minimum of three players at all times. If a team needs extra players any **registered** player from the same age group may be used.
- c) If a team or teams are more than ten minutes late for their scheduled game, the game is forfeited.
- d) NCAA reserves the right to reduce the number of scheduled games or shorten or cancel games due to rain or unforeseen circumstances.

## **2) Coaches Responsibilities**

- a) Coaches shall spot the ball after each play, keep track of the original line of scrimmage, place the 7 yard marker for the defensive team (see defensive rules), and call all penalties (see penalties).
- b) Coaches shall be fair and courteous to each other. No arguing or inappropriate language is permitted.
- c) Coaches are expected to ensure that all team members are fairly treated.

## **3) General Rules of the Game**

- a) No contact is allowed!
- b) Blocking and pick plays are not permitted.
- c) A coin toss determines first possession. The winner of the coin toss may take first possession or defer to the second half.
- d) The offensive team takes possession of the ball at their 5 yard line and has three plays to cross mid-field (or score a touchdown). If the team crosses mid-field, they get a first down and have three more plays to score a touchdown. If the offense fails to cross mid-field or score a touchdown, the other team takes possession of the ball at their 5 yard line. There are no punts or field goals.
- e) A center must snap the ball to the quarterback. This can be a conventional snap, sideways snap, or a shotgun snap to the quarterback. The ball must start from the ground. Direct snaps to running backs or receivers are not permitted.
- f) A ball carrier is considered down when his/her flag is pulled by a defensive player, his/her knee hits the ground, or he/she steps out of bounds. If the ball carrier's flag falls out, he/she is down at first contact of any kind with a defensive player. The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's belt is when he/she is considered to be down, not where the ball is.
- g) Interceptions - Interceptions can be returned. The ball is spotted where the interceptors flag is pulled. Interceptions made in the end zone and not returned (takes a knee) will come out to the 5 yard line.
- h) Fumbles - The play is dead when the ball hits the ground. The offense retains possession and the ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground (if behind the runner) or where the runner's belt was when the fumble occurred. The offense cannot advance the ball with a fumble. A fumble that does not touch the ground and is caught by the defense is treated as an interception. A fumble that lands in the offense's end zone is considered a safety.

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### **4) Scoring**

- a) TD – 6 points
- b) Safety – 2 points
- c) No extra point tries

### **5) Running**

- a) Any player but the QB may run the ball. The QB cannot run the ball even if he/she is blitzed.
- b) Handoffs and pitches are permitted. The player who takes the handoff may pass the ball as long as he does not cross the line of scrimmage.
- c) For grades 3 and up, no running zones are established within 5 yards of the end zone. Teams must pass the ball in the no running zones.
- d) Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a defensive player.

### **6) Receiving**

- a) All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
- b) One player is allowed in motion at a time.
- c) Players must have at least one foot in bounds when making a catch.

### **7) Passing**

- a) QB's have 7 seconds to pass the ball. If the QB does not pass the ball in 7 seconds, play is dead, loss of down, and the ball is spotted at the original line of scrimmage. Once the QB hands the ball off, the 7 second rule is no longer in effect.

### **8) Defense**

- a) Players that are not blitzing cannot cross the line of scrimmage until the ball is handed off or lateralled.
- b) All players that blitz must be a minimum of 7 yards behind the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can blitz. A marker will be placed at 7 yards behind the line of scrimmage by the coaches.

### **9) Time Outs -** Each team has one 60 second time out per game.

### **10) Attire**

- a) Cleats are allowed except for metal spikes.
- b) Shirts must be tucked in shorts or pants. Clothing shall not reduce access to the flags.

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## 11) Penalties

The following are general guidelines for penalties. At the coaches option, a relaxed version of the penalties may be implemented (basically, just redo the play). Both coaches should agree on the approach before the game.

- a) Delay of Game – Once the ball is spotted, the offense has 30 seconds to snap the ball. A warning will be issued for the first offense. Subsequent offenses will result in a five yard penalty.
- b) Offsides and Illegal Motion – 5 yard penalty. Defensive movement across the line of scrimmage before the snap is permitted provided no contact with an offensive player is made.
- c) Unsportmanlike Conduct
  - i) Intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots – If the penalty is on the defense, a warning will be issued and the penalty will be five yards from the end of the play and an automatic first down. If the penalty is on the offense, a warning will be issued and the penalty will be 5 yards from the original line of scrimmage and loss of down. Subsequent occurrences can result in ejection from the game.
  - ii) Trash talking is illegal. A warning will be issued. Subsequent occurrences can result in ejection from the game.
- d) Defensive Penalties - The following will result in a 5 yard penalty and automatic first down.
  - i) Pass Interference
  - ii) Illegal Contact – Intentional contact with a receiver before the ball is passed.
  - iii) Illegal Flag Pull – Defensive player grabbing clothes and holding on until the flag is pulled.
  - iv) Illegal Rushing – A player that is not at least 7 yards behind the line of scrimmage crossing the line of scrimmage before a hand off is made.
- e) Offensive Penalties – The following will result in a 5 yard penalty and loss of down.
  - i) Illegal Forward Pass – Pass does not cross the line of scrimmage.
  - ii) Offensive Pass Interference
  - iii) Flag Guarding – Using hands or clothes to keep defensive players from grabbing the flag.
  - iv) Illegal Pick Play – Receiver blocks a defensive player that is guarding another offensive player. Crossing patterns are permitted as long as intentional contact is not made..
  - v) Illegal Blocking – Intentional contact is made with a defensive player. An example would be a power running play in which offensive players form a wall in front of the ball carrier.