

YMCA Flag Football Rules

(Rules adapted from NFL Flag Football website)

- ✂ A coin toss determines first possession.
- ✂ 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.
- ✂ If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its 5-yard line.
- ✂ Teams change sides after the first 20 minutes. **Possession changes to the team who either lost the coin toss, or deferred possession at the beginning of the game.**
- ✂ **All game balls must be NFL size and will be provided by the Y.**

Players/Game Schedules

- ✂ Teams must field a minimum of five (5) players at all times. **If you cannot field a five man team, you can play with four players. If you have less than four players, you need to contact your opposing team and let them know. If they have enough players they may grant them to you (to prevent a forfeit situation). The team who gives up those players agrees to the possibility of taking a loss, rather than an automatic win by forfeiture.**
- ✂ Teams can consist of up to 10 players (5 on field with 5 substitutes).

Timing/Overtime

- ✂ Games are played to 40 minutes running time.
- ✂ If the score is tied at the end of 40 minutes, teams move directly into overtime. **A coin toss determines first possession. Just as in college, each team will alternate getting the ball on their opponent's 15 yard line. They will each get two (2) plays to score a touchdown. Teams can either go for 1 or 2 point conversions.**
- ✂ Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. **Failure to do so will result in a Delay of Game penalty and will stop the game clock.**
- ✂ Each team has one 60-second and one 30-second time out per half.
- ✂ Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.

Scoring

- Touchdown:** 6 points
- Extra point:** 1 point (played from the 5 yard line) or 2 points
(played from the 12 yard line)
- Safety:** 2 points

Running

- ✂ The quarterback cannot run with the ball.
- ✂ Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Offense may use multiple handoffs.
- ✂ Absolutely NO laterals of pitches beyond the line of scrimmage. Laterals will be allowed behind the line of scrimmage.
- ✂ "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.
- ✂ The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- ✂ Once the ball has been handed off, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- ✂ Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a defensive player (no diving).
- ✂ The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.

Receiving

- ✘ All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been lateraled behind the line of scrimmage)
- ✘ As in the NFL, only one player is allowed in motion at a time.
- ✘ A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.

Passing

- ✘ All passes must be forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage.
- ✘ Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
- ✘ The quarterback has a seven-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 no longer is in effect.
- ✘ Interceptions change the possession of the ball at the place where the intercepting player's flag is pulled. **THERE IS TO BE NO BLOCKING DURING AN INTERCEPTION RETURN!!!** Interceptions are the only changes of possession that do not start on the 5- yard line.

Dead Balls

- ✘ The ball must be snapped between the legs, not off to one side, to start play.
- ✘ Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
- ✘ Play is ruled "dead" when.
- ✘ Ball carrier's flag is pulled or flag falls out.
- ✘ Ball carrier steps out of bounds.
- ✘ Touchdown or safety is scored.
- ✘ Ball carrier's knee hits the ground.
- ✘ Spot where ball carrier flag guards.
- ✘ Snap that hits the ground. (If in end zone it is ruled a safety)
- ✘ **Player who catches the ball, missing one or both of his flags. (Catch counts)**
- ✘ **When a player leaves his feet.**
Note: There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground.

Rushing the Quarterback

- ✘ 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.
- ✘ 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. A special marker, or the referee, will designate seven yards from the line of scrimmage. Remember, no blocking or tackling is allowed.

Sportsmanship/Roughing

- ✘ If the referee witnesses any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking, or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game. **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.**
- ✘ Trash talking is illegal. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. (Trash talk is talk that may be offensive to officials, opposing players, teams, or spectators.) If trash talking occurs, the ref will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.
- ✘ The following will be considered "an act". They include: Swearing, Physical Aggressiveness, Arguing with Refs and other team players, and Unsportsmanlike Conduct.
- ✘ **If a player commits an "act", the head referees will confer and if agreed give that player a warning. If same player commits a second "act", the head referees will again confer and if agreed will eject said player from the game. Player must leave the premises immediately. If ejected, game in progress will not count towards minimum games played. If player receives second ejection, automatic four (4) game suspension and game in progress will not count for minimum games played. If ejected player does not leave premises immediately, it will count as second ejection. Any malicious act of violence (throwing a punch/kick, etc.) will constitute a ban from any YMCA of the Northwoods league, program or membership.**

Penalties

All penalties will be called by the referee.

Defense:

Offsides	5 yards
Interference	10 yards and automatic first down
Illegal contact	10 yards and automatic first down (holding, blocking, etc.)
Illegal flag pull	10 yards and automatic first down (before receiver has ball)
Illegal rushing	10 yards (starting rush from inside 7-yard marker)
Interception blocking	10 yards from foul and dead ball
Contact to QB's throwing arm/shoulder	10 yards

Offense has the right of way, the defensive player must make an attempt to avoid contact!!!

Offense:

Illegal motion	5 yards and loss of down (more than one person moving at once before snap)
Offensive pass interference	10 yards and loss of down (illegal pick play, pushing off defender, blocking)
Flag guarding	Down at place of foul
Delay of game	5 yards and replay down.

- ⌘ Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage. **Even though offense has the "right of way", any intentional contact by an offensive player (blocking, lowering the shoulder, plowing through a defender) will be a 10 yard penalty. If severe enough, it will also be considered "an act" and will be handled accordingly.**
- ⌘ Only the team captain may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players cannot question judgment calls.
- ⌘ Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.

Attire

- ⌘ Only Plastic cleats are allowed, no metal spikes, or metal tipped spikes will be allowed. Inspections must be made.
- ⌘ **Note:** There are no kickoffs, and no blocking is allowed!