

Youth Flag Football

Game Rules

Rosters

- Shall have a maximum of 12 players.
- Each team for each game shall designate two players as co-captains to call the coin flip and collect flag belts at the end of each game.
- **Mandatory playing rule: All players must play a minimum of half the game. Failure to abide by this rule will result in a forfeit of the game.**

Playing Field

- 80 yards in length, 40 yards in width. It is divided into 4 zones of 20 yards between two end zones of 10 yards each.
- First downs are awarded each time a team crosses over another Zone line. (All corners and first down lines will be clearly marked with cones during the game.)
- There is no Goal posts, a point after touchdown (PAT) are made by passing or running from the 3 yard line.

Flags

- Each player must wear a belt. Jerseys or T-shirts cannot be worn over the flags. Any player that does not have two flags will be ineligible to handle the ball (even if his/her flag inadvertently drops during the play).

Football

- 1st - 2nd Grade – Pee Wee Ball
- 3rd - 4th Grade – Pee Wee Ball
- 5th – 6th Grade – Junior Ball
- 7th – 8th Grade – Youth Ball

Uniforms

- All team members must wear the same color shirt. Shirts must be tucked in at all times. Pants may be worn but no pockets or belt loops.
- Any type of shoes is allowed EXCEPT metal cleats.

Referees

- 1 official for grades 1st – 4th and 2 officials for grades 5th – 8th will work each game. They will be assigned by the Smithfield Recreation Center (SRC). Smithfield Recreation staff will monitor the program.

Playing Rules

- Free substitution is always in effect and a player may enter the game any time the ball is dead.
- Seven players (maximum) are on the field from each team. A time clock is kept. The game will consist of four, 12-minute quarters, running clock, and a 3-minute half time.
- There are no overtime games; if a game is tied it is over. There are no win-loss records kept. Please arrive at the park early enough to start your game on time.
- Each half will start in a kick off.

- **1st – 2nd Grade:** Designated kicking area inside midfield (it will be marked on the field).
- **3rd – 4th Grade:** Designated kicking area outside midfield (it will be marked on the field).
- **5th - 6th Grade:** Designated kicking area outside midfield (it will be marked on the field).
- **7th – 8th Grade:** Designated kicking area from the 20-yard line.
- **During the kick, off the receiving team must have a minimum of 3 players on the line nearest the kicker. Kick offs DO NOT count as a play; however, punts are.**
- **Kick off's that go out of bounds will be marked on the first down line closest to where the receiving team was heading when the ball went out.**

Punting

- **Intentions to punt are announced to the referee by the offense. The punt is always a free kick with all players on both offense and defense holding a position until the ball has been kicked.**
- **On punts, teams can decide whether they want to punt the ball normally or use a "T".**

Kicking

- **There are no onside kicks allowed.**

Downs

- **Each team will have four downs to advance the ball into the next zone or to score a touchdown. Once a team enters the next zone it is a first down and new series of downs begin.**

Defense

- **Defense may line up in any formation**
- **A "tackle" is recorded when the player having possession of the ball has his flag removed from the waist. The defensive player will hold the flag above his head and show the official.**
- **The defense cannot hold or push the ball carrier down. An accidental touch of the body or shoulder while reaching for the flag will not be considered a violation; however, touching the head in anyway will be a violation.**
- **A defensive player must go for the passers flag; he cannot hit or attempt to block the passers arm.**
- **There is a 2-yard neutral zone. On the snap the defense must count to 2-alligator before they can rush.**

Offense

- **Basic Rule of Offense: Must have 4 players lined up on the line of scrimmage and 3 players in the back field. The backfield shall be considered one step or more behind in the line scrimmage. (This is important to teach every player that they are either on the line or in the backfield). The officials will call this if they don't line up correctly.**
- **Players on the offensive line must be lined up within 10 yards of the ball laterally and all players must be set for at least on second prior to the center snap.**
- **A blocker must always be on his feet while blocking. No lineman except the center can assume the 2-point stance; they must simply stand or put their hands on their legs and await the snap.**
- **A blocker cannot use his hands. Blocking shall be done with the arms and body in the form of shoulder and brush blocking only. Blockers cannot leave their feet to block.**
- **Blocking from behind is not permitted (clipping).**
- **Hiking the ball - a dropped ball--can be picked up and ran, instead of a loss of down**

Ball Carriers

- **Cannot use their hands and arms to protect their flag.**
- **Cannot stiff arm a defensive player or lower his head to drive into the defense.**
- **The ball carrier cannot spin or hurdle to avoid the defense.**
- **Ball carriers cannot run straight up the middle of the line unless there is some delay on the hand off during the play.**
- **The center must snap the ball between his legs.**

Passing

- **All players are eligible to receive passes.**
- **All forward passes must be made from behind the line of scrimmage. (A lateral pass is not considered a forward pass).**

Receiving

- **A receiver needs only one foot in bounds for a legal catch.**

Dead Balls

- **All balls touching the ground are immediately dead (except kickoffs, hiking the ball and punts).**

Other Examples

- **When the ball carrier touches the ground with his body, other than hands and feet.**
- **Ball carriers' flag has been removed.**
- **If the receiver or ball carrier has a missing flag, ball is dead at that point.**
- **When the ball hits the ground because of a fumble or muffed ball. There are no fumble recoveries in flag football.**

Coaches on the field

- **Coaches are permitted to “coach” on the field but must stay out of the way of play. The officials will use their judgment on coaches being “in the way”.**
- **Coaches will have 45 seconds to call a play and organize their team. If the team is not ready after 45 seconds, then it will be a 5-yard penalty.**

Penalties/Violations

- **Wherever the violation occurs that is where the ball is spotted and determined to be dead.**
- **Penalties at the line of scrimmage will result in a 5-yard loss.**