



Norfolk Family YMCA Flag Football Rules

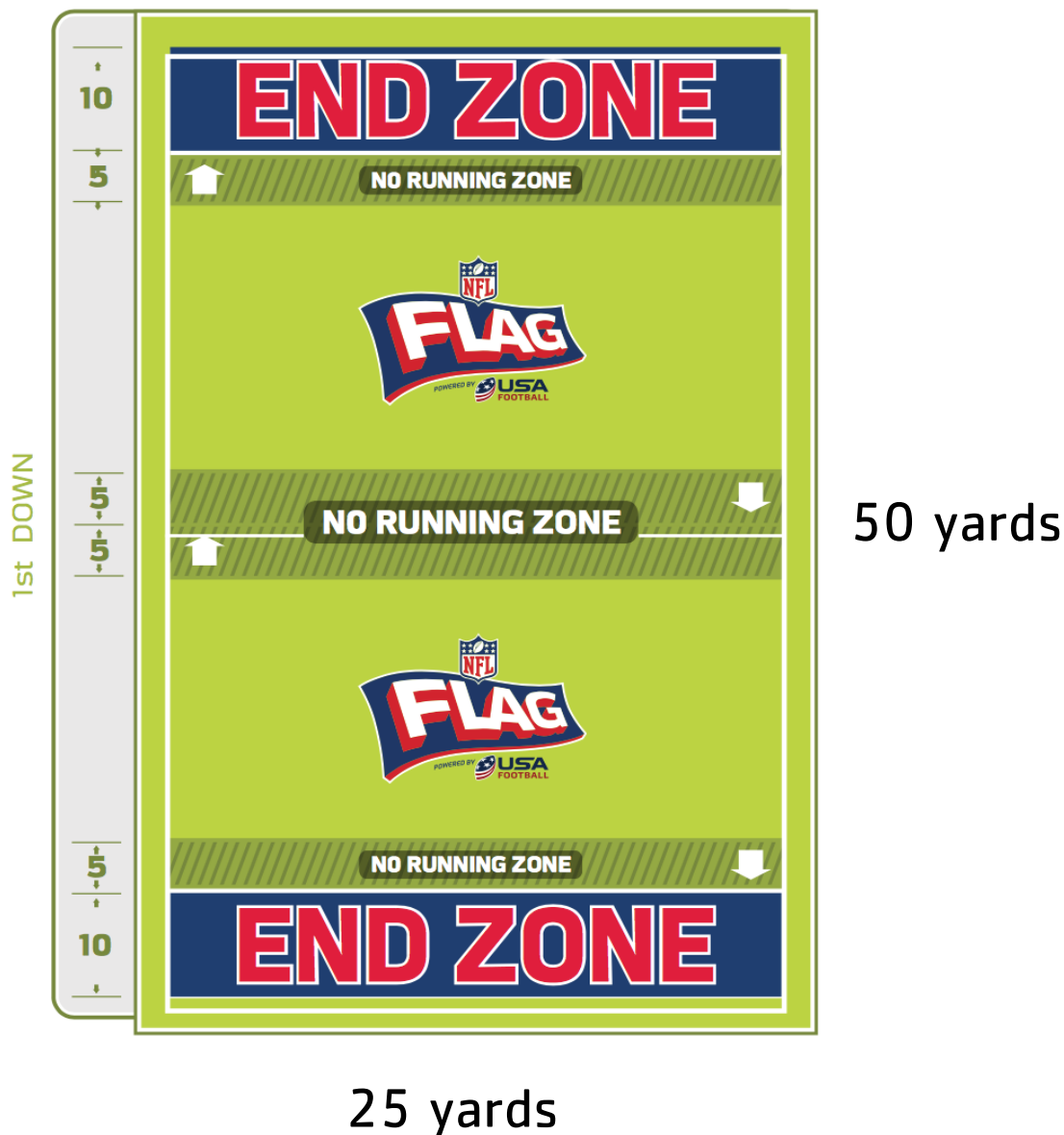
ATTIRE

- Cleats are allowed, except for metal spikes. Inspections must be made. All players must wear a protective mouthpiece; THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS. Must wear YMCA reversible jersey. Red is the away team, blue is the home team
- Players must tuck jersey in to prevent Flag Guarding.

PERSONNEL

FIELD SIZE

- The playing field will be 25 yards wide by 50 yards long with 10-yard endzones.
- No-running zones are located 5 yards from the opposing end zone and 5 yards before each 1st down mark. These are designed to avoid short-yardage power running situations.



PLAYING TIME GUIDELINES

- All players must play at minimum, half of a game.
- Each player must start one game throughout the season. The coach may alternate his starting line-up each week.
- Offense and defense will be given the opportunity to substitute at any point. Must notify official
- Each player must be given the opportunity to play every position throughout the season.
- Must rotate offensive backfield throughout the game. Players may only play in the backfield for the equivalent of one-half per game, where that player cannot play in the backfield for the entire game. Coach must rotate backfield, line, and wide receiver position.
- Allowances may be made for missed practices and/or behavioral issues.

COACHING CONDUCT

- Coaches will be expected to adhere to YMCA philosophies, coaching guidelines and codes of conduct.
- FOR ALL GRADES: One coach will be permitted to be on the field for each team.

TIMING / OVERTIME

- Games consist of 12-minute quarters running time including a 1–2-minute break between quarters.
- After a touchdown, the extra point after will start on the 5-yard line.
- Each time the ball is spotted, the offense has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before delay-of-game penalty is enforced.
- Each team has one 60-second and one 30-second time out per half. Each game will have a 5-minute half time.
- Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
- There will be no overtime, as no official score is kept.

BEGINNING OF GAME

- Away team (red) will start with the ball.
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four (4) plays to get past the 1st down mark at the center field line (30yrd marker). If the offense fails to get a first down, or score, the ball changes possession and the defense takes over where the other team left off unless the offense elected to punt on 4th down.
- If the offense fails to get a first down after their 3rd down play, on 4th down they can elect to punt. Possession of the ball then changes, and the opposition starts from their 5-yard line. If 4th down is attempted and failed, the opposing team receives possession wherever the ball is downed.
- Teams change sides after the first half and the home team starts with the ball to start the second half.

RUNNING

- The quarterback cannot run with the ball. If he is being rushed, he can run around but cannot cross the line of scrimmage.
- Direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Offense may use multiple handoffs.
- The player who takes the handoffs 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 or jumping).
- The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.
- Once a player crosses the line of scrimmage, they possess the ball until they are downed or score.

PASSING/RECEIVING

- 1st – 4th grade:
 - 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.
 - Must attempt at least one pass per quarter.
- 5th–6th grade:
 - Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage
 - Pitches or Laterals will be allowed. Laterals beyond the line of scrimmage will not be allowed.
- Screens will be allowed. The quarterback has a seven-second pass clock. If a pass is not thrown within seven seconds, play is dead and loss of down. Once the ball is handed off, the seven-second rule no longer is in effect.
- All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off 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.

PITCHES/LATERALS

- FOR ALL GRADES: One pitch per play will be allowed BEHIND the line of scrimmage
 - NO laterals or pitches of any kind will be allowed beyond the line of scrimmage.

DEADBALLS

- ALL GRADES - *SHOTGUN – Quarterback is allowed to start with the ball in Shotgun formation and hike the ball from this position. This allows for games to move faster and get more plays in. Teams will be allowed two snaps that touch ground before reaching quarterback before loss of down is assessed.
 - You may also snap the ball off the center's back for all grades if you do not want to do shotgun.
- Play is "dead" when:
 - Ball carrier's flag is pulled.
 - Ball carrier steps out of bounds.
 - Touchdown or safety is scored.
 - Ball carrier's knee hits the ground.
 - Ball carrier's flag falls out. Note:
 - If the flag detaches on its own, the ball carrier must be touched for the ball to be declared dead. Will be down where they are touched.
 - Interception on an extra point attempt.
 - Ball is dropped from a pass, shovel pass, pitch, lateral or screen.
- Fumbles: The ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground. Offense keeps possession.

BLOCKING

- Screening is allowed. Screeners **MUST** put both hands behind their back, locked together in some manner for the duration of the screen. A penalty will be called if a screener's arms are separated from behind their back while screening **within 2 yards of the rusher**.
- Moving screens are only allowed behind the line of scrimmage when protecting the passer or potential passer. Moving screens are when a player is in motion to prevent the rusher from de-flagging a player.
- Stationary screens are allowed anywhere. Once the ball crosses the line of scrimmage, all downfield screens must be stationary. Offensive players may NOT run with the ball carrier.
- Screener may NOT step into the rusher. However, the screener is in a vulnerable position with hands behind their back so the main responsibility of avoiding contact rests with the rusher.

DEFENSE

- **NO Tackling is allowed under ANY circumstances.**
- All defensive players must be a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped.
- If the defense intercepts a pass in regular play, they may return it. Player is down when flag is pulled or touched if flag falls out.
- Defensive player must "play on the flag, rather than the ball carrier."

RUSHING THE QUARTERBACK

- A maximum of two (2) defenders can rush the quarterback. Must wait two (2) seconds before they can rush.
- Once the ball is handed off, the seven-yard rule and two second rule are no longer in effect, and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage. A cone or the official, will designate seven yards from the line of scrimmage. Remember, NO tackling is allowed.

SPORTSMANSHIP/ROUGHING

- If the official witnesses any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped, and the player will be ejected from the game IMMEDIATELY. **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!**
- Trash Talking is illegal. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If trash talking occurs, the official will give one warning. If it continues, the person responsible will be ejected from the game IMMEDIATELY!

PENALTIES

- **Defensive:**
 - Offside 5 yards
 - Roughing the player (automatic 1st down) 5 yards
 - Illegal Contact (holding, excessive contact, etc.) 5 yards
 - Illegal Flag Pull (before the receiver has ball) 5 yards
 - Illegal Rushing (starting to rush from inside 7-yard marker) 5 yards
 - Defensive Pass Interference 5 yards & automatic 1st down
- **Offensive:**
 - Illegal Motion (2+ people moving, false start, etc.) 5 yards
 - Illegal Forward Pass (pass received behind the LOS) 5 yards
 - Illegal Screen (moving screen downfield, contact, etc.) 5 yards from point of infraction
 - Offensive Pass Interference (pushing off defender) 5 yards & loss of down
 - Flag Guarding 5 yards from spot of foul
 - Delay of Game 5 yards (clock stops)
 - Unsportsmanlike Conduct 15 yards & possible ejection
- **Unnecessary Roughness** is any action where a player uses unnecessary force to down the ball carrier (i.e. tackling) or block a player (i.e. extending arms and shoving). 1st offense is a warning with no yardage assessment. 2nd offense is a 15-yard penalty and/or possible ejection.
- Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage.
- Only the team coach 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.