

Norfolk Family YMCA

Flag Football Rules

Equipment:

- MOUTHPIECE IS MANDATORY!
- Tennis shoes or cleats (no metal)
- YMCA red/blue reversible jersey – jerseys must be tucked in to prevent flag guarding
- No exposed jewelry may be worn during play

Field Size:

- Fields will be 30 yards wide by 60 yards long with 5-yard endzones.
- No running zones are located 5 yards from the opposing end zone and 5 yards before each 1st down. These are designed to avoid short-yardage power running situations.



Participation:

- Teams must field 6-7 players at all times for 1st-6th grade.
- All players **MUST** play at least half of every game.
- Each player must start one game throughout the season. The coach should alternate their starting line-up each week.
- Substitutions may be made at any point, however, officials must be notified first!
- Every player must be given the opportunity to play every position throughout the season.
- Players can only play quarterback or running back for the equivalent of one half per game.
- Allowances may be made for missed practices and/or behavioral issues.

Sportsmanship:

- Good sportsmanship is to prevail at all times. Coaches will be held responsible for the conduct of themselves and their players. The YMCA philosophies, coaching guidelines, and codes of conduct must be reflected at all times.
- **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!** If officials witness 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.
- 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!

Game Time:

- 1st-6th Grade – Games consist of 10-minute quarters with a running clock including a 1-2 minute break between quarters.
- The clock is only stopped on timeouts and injuries. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
- 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.

Timeouts/Overtime:

- Each team has one 60-second timeout per half.
- There is no overtime, as no official score is kept.

Game Rules:

- **Away team (red) will start with the ball.**
- **FOR ALL GRADES:** Only ONE coach is permitted to be on the field during a game.
- **THERE ARE NO KICKOFFS.** The offensive team takes possession at its 5-yard line and has 4 plays to get past the 1st down mark at center field.
- 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.
- After a touchdown, the extra point after will start on the 5-yard line.

Running:

- The quarterback cannot run with the ball. If they are being rushed, they 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:

- 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.
- 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.
- All teams must attempt at least one pass per quarter.
- Screen plays will not 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).
- Only one player is allowed in motion at a time.
- A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.

Dead ball:

- **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.
 - Ball carrier's knee hits the ground.
 - Ball carrier's flag falls out. (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.)
 - Touchdown or safety is scored or 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, and remain **STATIONARY**. A penalty will be called if a screener's arms are separated from behind their back while screening within 2 yards of the rusher.
- 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.
- Blockers cannot form a wall in front of the runner past the line of scrimmage.

Defense:

- NO Tackling is allowed under ANY circumstances.
- 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.

Rushing the Quarterback:

- Maximum of 2 defenders can rush the quarterback. Must wait two seconds before they can rush. Rushers must line up 7-yards from the line of scrimmage
- A cone or the official, will designate seven yards from the line of scrimmage.

Penalties:

Defensive – 5 yard penalties (exception: unsportsmanlike conduct)	Offensive – 5 yard penalties (exception: unsportsmanlike conduct)
● Offside ● Roughing the player (automatic 1st down) ● Illegal Contact (holding, excessive contact, etc.) ● Illegal Flag Pull (before the receiver has ball) ● Illegal Rushing (starting to rush from inside 7-yard marker) ● Defensive Pass Interference – Automatic 1st down ● Unsportsmanlike Conduct – 15 yards & possible ejection	● Illegal Motion (2+ people moving, false start, etc.) ● Illegal Forward Pass (pass received behind the LOS) ● Illegal Screen (moving screen downfield, contact, separated arms, etc.) ● Offensive Pass Interference (pushing off defender) – loss of down ● Flag Guarding ● Delay of Game ● Unsportsmanlike Conduct – 15 yards & possible ejection

- Unnecessary Roughness is any action where a player uses unnecessary force. i.e. tackling, extending arms, or shoving. 1st offense is a warning. 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 can ask questions regarding referees calls.