

Metro Youth Football Association

Flag Football Rules

Effective 2021

Practices

1. Teams may not practice more than one hour twice each week.
2. The Head Coach determines the location of practice. (Typically local schools and parks).
3. Please be in contact with the school or park that you are practicing at.
4. If they require insurance certifications, please let a member of the Metro Board know.

Games

1. The playing field will be regulation width but only 40 yards long.
2. Home teams provide the game ball and the "chain gang".
3. Home Team Sidelines: Team will take the West sideline and bench.
4. Visiting Team Sidelines: Team will take the East sideline and bench.
5. Game balls will be provided by the league
6. Each team is allowed two 30 second time outs per half.
7. There will be a coin toss to start the game.
8. There are no kick-offs. The ball will be placed on the 10 yard line for the start of the first and second halves. The ball will be placed on the 10 yard line after any score.
9. There will be a one-minute break between the first and second and the third and fourth quarters. There will be a 10-minute break between halves. Teams will change directions at half time only. Length of halftime is at discretion of field judge.
10. A maximum of two coaches, per team, will be allowed on the field during the game. On field coaches must not interfere with play. All other coaches must be on the sideline during the game.
11. Each team will have 8 players playing at a time
12. Games will have at least one referee.
13. 3rd/4th Grade Game rules
 - Each team will get a series of four downs, within the rules, to move the ball ten yards for a first down
 - Games will consist of four 10 minute continuous clock quarters
14. 1st/2nd Grade Game rules
 - A quarter will consist of 8 plays. One team will be on Offense for all 8 plays, while another team is on Defense for all 8 plays.
 - Next Quarter both teams switch offense for defense.
 - Extra Points will count as a play
 - A team may score as many times as able over 8 plays.
 - If the eighth play is a TD, an extra point will still be awarded
 - Coaches will make sure that each player gets 8 offensive plays and 8 defensive plays in a game.

Scoring

1. Since "winning" is not the primary emphasis in this league, referees will not keep track of the score.
2. An "extra point" try will be run from the 2 yard line following a score.

Equipment

1. Each player shall wear a **MYFA PROVIDED** flag belt with two flags.
2. **Each player shall wear a protective mouthpiece.** This applies to **practice** as well as **games**.
3. Players must keep their “jerseys” tucked in at all times.
4. Footballs issued by MYFA will be used for each game.
5. Players can wear rubber molded cleats.

Players

1. Each team shall have a roster of 8-16 players. (Every effort will be made to not have teams over 16, however this may happen from time to time depending on availability of coaches etc)
2. Each team shall play an 8 player squad at a time.
3. These squads shall play continuously, except in the case of an injury, on both offense and defense.
4. **No players will leave the field during a quarter (Exception – team with 17 players).**
5. All players will play **BOTH** offense and defense.
6. No player will be allowed to wear jewelry during practice or games. This includes, but is not limited to earrings, watches, rings and necklaces.

Substitutions

1. **Substitutions may only be made at the end of each quarter unless teams have more than 16 players**
2. In quarter substitutions may only be made when a player is injured or because of **extreme** fatigue.
3. In the event a team has more than 16 players available for a game, that team may substitute freely, in an attempt to make sure that all players have a reasonable opportunity for equal playing time.
4. Games will be played even if one or both teams scheduled have less than 8 players available, but if a team has less than 7 players available at game time, it shall forfeit that day’s game. Make up games are at the discretion of the league.
5. If a team has more than 16 players, coaches will make every effort to make sure players get an equitable amount of playing time and not having the same play runners each game.

Offense

1. Each play must have a Balanced Line.
2. The backfield will consist of a quarterback and two running backs.
3. There must be five players on the line of scrimmage.
4. All shifting and motion plays must be within the rules of football.
5. Lineman must have their hands on their knees at the snap.
6. Blocking is allowed if the blocker is holding onto their own jersey.
7. All offensive players are eligible to catch a pass.
8. The center must “snap” the ball to the backfield (quarterback or running back). There will be no center sneaks or “fumblerooski’s”.

9. No "Flag Guarding".
10. All plays shall begin with a huddle.
11. Huddles will last no longer than 30 seconds.
12. Ball carriers cannot "hurdle" or otherwise leave their feet.
13. There will be no "stiff arms".
14. Teams choosing to punt can elect to kick or throw the ball down the field.

Defense

1. The Defense may line up in any fashion.
2. The referee will count to three (one Mississippi, etc.) and yell "go" before the defense can rush the passer.
3. Quarterbacks that drop back "in the pocket" will be afforded the entire 3 count.
4. Once the quarterback or a running back begins forward or lateral (down the line) progress with the ball, the referee will stop counting and the defense can go after the offensive player.
5. Any fake hand off will be considered a running play or lateral movement and the referee will stop counting and the defense can go after the offensive player.
6. There are no punt returns. The ball is down at the point it is caught, touched, or stops rolling.
7. **Pass interceptions returns are allowed.**
8. Tackling is absolutely prohibited.
9. Defensive players cannot push or otherwise force a ball carrier from the field of play.

Dead Balls

1. The Ball is considered "down " when any of the following occurs:
 - a. Ball carrier is de-flagged
 - b. Ball carrier steps out of bounds
 - c. Ball is fumbled
 - d. When the ball is caught or touched after a punt
 - e. Ball carriers knee hits the ground
 - f. **Ball Carriers flag belt falls off**
2. Incomplete passes are not considered "live"
3. Fumbles
 - a. A fumbled ball will be considered "dead" and the fumbling team will retain possession at the spot of the fumble.
 - b. If the fumble occurs on 4th down, the ball will be considered "Turned Over" on downs at the spot of the ball.
 - c. Fumbles may not be advanced by the fumbling team.
4. A punt is considered dead at the place the receiving team first makes contact with the ball and cannot be advanced or fumbled.

Penalties

1. Flag Guarding – 5 Yards
2. Unnecessary Roughness – 15 Yards
3. Unsportsmanlike Conduct – 15 Yards
4. Offside and False Starts – 5 Yards

5. Delay of Game – 5 Yards
6. Illegal Block – 10 Yards
7. Holding – 10 Yards
8. Pass Interference – 10 Yards
9. All penalties are assessed from the line of scrimmage
10. Interpretation of the penalties will be based on the intent of the league
11. **There will be no “on field” penalty discussions.** The referee’s calls are final.
12. A Head Coach needing clarification on a particular call should direct his or her question to a **league official after the game.**
13. **Questions concerning penalties will not be taken from fans at any time.**

Spectators

1. Spectators are expected to behave in an appropriate manner at all times.
2. Spectators will not harass any player, coach, or official.
3. Spectators are not to argue with any referee or league official.
4. No alcoholic beverages will be brought on or consumed at the MYFA Complex. Spectators who are inebriated will not be allowed in the complex.
5. Spectators will be removed from the MYFA Complex if found in violation of the preceding.

Coaches

1. Remember these are young people: **HAVE FUN**, teach the fundamentals of football and maintain the safety and well-being of the kids.
2. **Coaches will not verbally or physically abuse players in any fashion.** *Coaches found in violation of this rule will be directed to leave the program and may be subject to legal action!*
3. Coaches may not use tobacco or alcoholic beverages near any of the kids either at practice fields or at games.
4. The Head Coach is responsible for:
 - a. The conduct of your players
 - b. The conduct of your assistant coaches
 - c. The conduct of your own team’s fans during games
 - d. Ensuring all players have an equal opportunity to play offense and defense
 - e. Players wearing protective mouthpieces at practices and games
 - f. Ensuring all players are picked up after practices *before* leaving the practice field
5. The equipment provided by the league must be returned immediately following your last game of the season. This includes flag sets, footballs, gear bags, etc.