



Youth Flag Football Rules

Updated 1/21/09

The Basics

- Referees at Rivers Edge Indoor will be in compliance with the **USTFL** rulebook. Copies of the rulebook can be found at the library or purchased online.
- A coin toss determines first possession.
- Play will begin with offensive team taking possession at it's own 5-yard line.
- Offensive team has four downs to cross midfield.
- Once past midfield the offensive has four downs to score a touchdown, if unable to score possession changes and the opposing team takes possession at the previous spot of the ball.
- There must be three offensive players on the line of scrimmage when ball is snapped.
- A neutral zone will be determined by the line referee, offensive and defensive players cannot enter this zone until the ball is snapped.
- Interceptions may be returned.
- Possession changes to loser of coin toss unless deferred and the clock does not stop.
- **There are no fumbles.** The ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground. If the quarterback or the center mishandles the snap, the ball is dead where the ball hits the ground.
- **You may lateral the ball past the line of scrimmage.** If the ball is fumbled the ball is dead where it hits the ground and remains the offensive team's ball, unless it is a turnover on downs.
- **5 second count before defenders can rush the quarterback**
- **The time, for the last two minutes of each half will be kept by an official with a stopwatch.**

Attire

No metal or screw-in cleats are allowed. Inspections will be made. It is recommended that all players wear a protective mouthpiece.

Players/Game Schedules

Teams must field a minimum of seven players at all times. Team rosters consist of no more than 14 players – seven on the field, with seven 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. Each team starts from midfield and has four plays to score. Teams must go for two points beginning in the second overtime period.

Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 25 seconds to snap the ball.

Each team has one 60-second timeout per half. Timeouts do not carry over.

Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.

The clock will stop for touchdowns, extra points, going out of bounds and penalties within the last 2 minutes left of the game.

Scoring

Touchdown is 6 points, an extra point from the 5 yard line (top of the penalty box) is worth 1 point whereas an extra point from the 10 yard line is worth 2 points.

A Safety is worth 2 points.

Running

The quarterback can run with the ball. **Direct hand offs are NOT permitted, only laterals or forward passes are permitted.** If a lateral is intercepted by a player, the ball is live and can be returned.

“No-running zones”

These are located in at the top of the mid-circle in the middle of the field and starting at the top of the penalty box line, and are designed to avoid short-yardage, power-running situations.

Spinning is allowed.

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:

- __ When the ball hits the ground**
- 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: **There are NO fumbles.** The ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground.

Rushing the Quarterback

All players are eligible to rush the quarterback. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage. When rushing, no defensive player is allowed to grab hold of the jersey/shirt of the offensive player to gain an advantage. Hand may be used to get past the offensive line, but no holding of any sorts is allowed.

Blocking

Blocking with your hands is **NOT** allowed in this flag football league. Once the ball is snapped, the offensive linemen can stay and block with their hands behind their back, or they may go out for a pass.

Once you are past the line of scrimmage, no blocking is allowed with hands whatsoever. This includes offensive and defensive players. Players may run with the ball carrier downfield as long as no hands, arms, or elbows are used to prevent a defender from getting to the flags.

Hands or arms to the face will not be permitted. If seen, a penalty will be enforced.

Sportsmanship/Roughing

If the field monitor or referee 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. **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 referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.

Foul language will not be tolerated on the field of play. Referees reserve the right to eject players from the game based on foul language.

Any fighting results in a **minimum** of a 1 game suspension for the players involved. Any second instance of fighting from the same player will result in suspension for the remainder of the season. A third offense results in a lifetime ban from the league.

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.