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# Pee Wee and Youth Flag Football Rules

## YMCA OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY

### PLAYERS AND COACHES

Teams must field a minimum of 5 players at all times.

1. Rosters are encouraged to have 8-9 players per team.
2. Each team on the field will consist of 5 players to start the game.
3. All players must play equal minutes, mandatory obligation for coaches.
4. All referee calls are final. There will be ONE conversation regarding rule interpretation per half, per team, requested by the head coach only. This is a timeout charged to the requesting team. Coaches will have an opportunity to ask for clarification at halftime or the end of the game.

### GAME

1. At the start of the game, captains from both teams shall meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who shall start with the ball.
2. The winner of the coin toss gets to decide taking possession or defense. The loser gets to decide which end zone they would like to defend. Teams may defer to second half choice.
3. The offensive team takes possession at its 5 yard line and has 4 plays to cross midfield for a first down. Once a team crosses mid field it had 4 four plays to score a touchdown.
4. If the offense fails to score or fails to cross midfield in its 4 plays the ball changes possession and the opposition starts from its own 5 yard line.
5. All possession changes, except interceptions, start at the offenses 5 yard line.
6. Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the loser of the coin toss.

### TERMINOLOGY

- **Boundary Lines** – the outer perimeter lines around the field including the sidelines and the back of the endzones. Sidelines must be clear of flags, balls, water bottles, and spectators.
- **Line of Scrimmage** – an imaginary line running through the spot of the football across the width of the field.
- **Line to gain** – the line the offense must pass to get a first down or score.
- **Rush line** – imaginary line running across the width of the field 7 yards into the defensive side from the line of scrimmage.
- **Offense** – the team with possession of the ball.
- **Defense** – the team opposing the offense to prevent them from advancing the ball.
- **Quarterback** – the offensive player the calls the signals to start the play.
- **Rusher** – the defensive player(s) assigned to rush the quarterback, must be positioned 7 yards behind the line of scrimmage.
- **Downs** – the team on offense has 4 attempts, plays, or downs to advance the ball. They must cross midfield line to get another set of downs to score.
- **Live ball** – the period of time the play is in action. Generally used in regards to penalties.

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- **Dead ball** – the period of time immediately before or after a play.
- **Whistle** – the sound made by an official using a whistle that signifies the end of a play or stop in action for timeout, half time or end of game.
- **Inadvertent Whistle** – an official's whistle that is performed in error.
- **Charging** – the movement of the ball carrier directly at a defensive player who has established position on the field. This includes lowering the head, making contact with the shoulder, forearm, or chest and will result in a penalty.
- **Flag Guarding** – the deliberate guarding of the flags by the ball carrier to inhibit the defense from grabbing them. Typically lowering and slapping or swinging arm down that results in penalty.
- **Lateral or Pitch** – a backwards or sideways toss of the ball by the quarterback or ball carrier. Behind the line of scrimmage only.
- **Unsportsmanlike Conduct** – rude, confrontational or offensive behavior or language. Applies to players, coaches, and spectators. This results in a penalty.

## ELIGIBILITY

1. All players must be registered through the YMCA and fall within the specified age or grade range assigned. Players may play up an age or grade level but not down.
2. All players must have a signed waiver by legal guardian or parent.

## EQUIPMENT

1. The Y will furnish all game equipment such as flags, balls, and uniforms. Participants and parents will supply mouth guards, water bottles and towels. (Rubber cleats optional.)
2. Shirts or jerseys must be tucked in.
3. Pants and shorts without loops or pockets only.
4. SHOES: Gym, tennis, soccer and multi-purpose shoes are acceptable. Bare feet, street shoes, and shoes designated and manufactured specifically for football without rubber cleats, will NOT be allowed.
5. Personal protective equipment, such as kneepads, arm pads, gloves shall be inspected before game. Players may tape their fore arms, hands, and fingers.
6. Players must remove all jewelry.
7. Mouth guards are highly recommended but not required.
8. Flags used shall the 3-belt system and must be different color than uniform. Flags must be tied on correctly.
9. Football sizes:  
Pee wee size: Ages 5-8 yrs  
Junior Size: Ages 9-12 yrs

## TIMING/OVERTIME

1. The game consists of two (2) 20-minute halves with a running clock format. If the score is tied at the end of 40 minutes it remains tied. No overtime.
2. Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.
3. Each team has one 60-second and one 30-second time-out per half. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.



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4. Halftime is 3 minutes long.

**SCORING – The YMCA flag football league does not track or encourage individual game scoring nor win/loss records.**

1. Touchdown - 6 POINTS
2. Safety - 2 POINTS to the defensive team and the ball is awarded to the defensive team at their 5 yard line.
  - a. A safety occurs when the ball carrier is called down in his or her own endzone. They can be called down when their flags are pulled by a defensive player, their flags fall off, they step out of bounds, or they hit the ground with a knee or elbow. A safety can also occur when there is an offensive penalty in the endzone.
3. Conversion - 1 POINT. The ball shall be placed at the top of the no run zone.
4. Conversion- 2 POINTS. The ball shall be placed 5 yards from the 1 point conversion spot.

**NOTE: There will be NO kicking conversions allowed.**

## COACHES

1. All coaches must complete and sign all volunteer paperwork and go through background check and child abuse prevention training.
2. Only one offensive and defensive coach is allowed on the field to direct players. Defensive coaches need to move to the sideline before the ball is snapped.
3. Coaches are expected to adhere to the YMCA philosophies, coaching guidelines, and code of conduct.

## PASSING

- Shovel passes are allowed.
- The quarterback has a **seven-second "pass clock."** If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, play is dead, loss of down. Once the ball is handed off, the seven-second rule no longer is in effect. **9 second pass clock for pee wee league**
- **Interceptions may be returned unless the point spread is more than 18 points (3 touchdowns).**
- If the quarterback is standing in the endzone when the 7 second clock expires, the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage and is a loss of down. This is not a safety.

## RUNNING

**\*\*The quarterback cannot run with the ball. \*\***

- Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Offense may use multiple handoffs.
- **"No-running zones" located five yards from each end zone and five yards on either side of midfield are designed to avoid short-yardage, power-running situations. The player who takes the handoff 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. The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.



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## **CHARGING AND TACKLING**

- A. The ball carrier may not run through a defensive player, but must attempt to evade the defensive players. The defensive player must not hold nor run through a ball carrier **BUT MUST PLAY THE FLAG NOT THE PLAYER OR THE BALL.** Defensive player may attempt to block a pass as long as contact is not made with passer.
- B. Defensive roughness against the ball carrier.
  - a. Violators involved in the following fouls may be banished from the game at the discretion of the officials.
    - Tackling the ball carrier.
    - Holding the ball carrier.
    - Blocking the ball carrier.
    - Tripping the ball carrier.
    - Pushing the ball carrier.
    - Charging the ball carrier.
    - Bumping the ball carrier.
    - Pushing out-of-bounds.

## **BLOCKING**

- A. **OFFENSE:** An offensive blocker may use only the standing block, with the forearms and hands folded to the body. Hands may not be fully extended in front of blocker's body or may not extend wider than blocker's shoulder width. No part of the blocker's body, except the feet, shall be in contact with the ground throughout the block. Lineman will allow four-point blocking only on the initial charge.
- B. **DEFENSE:** Defensive players are restrained in use of hands to pushing the shoulders and body of offensive blockers. Slapping or striking is not allowed and will be penalized



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## LIVE BALL/DEAD BALL

The play is live when the ball passes through or next to the center's legs. Dropped snaps are a dead ball and loss of down. **(Pee wee division will get one redo per possession on a dropped snap)**

Substitutions may occur on any dead ball.

The defense may not mimic the offensive team signals to start the play.

The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage. It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player is in the neutral zone or offside. The official may give both teams a courtesy neutral zone notification to allow players to get back onside.

Play is ruled "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
- The ball hits the ground
- An inadvertent whistle is performed

Note: There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground.

## RUSHING THE QUARTERBACK

All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of **seven yards** from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage. Rushing can only begin once the ball is snapped.

A penalty will be called:

If the rusher crosses the rush line before the ball has passes through or next to the centers legs

Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped. (5 yard penalty)

Any defensive player not on the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is handed off or passed. (5 yard penalty)

Once the ball is handed off, the seven-yard rule no longer is in effect, and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage. A special marker, or the referee, will designate seven yards from the line of scrimmage.

A team is not required to rush the quarterback, 7 second rule is in effect.

Teams are not required to identify who their rusher is before the play.

If a rusher leaves the 7 yard line before the snap, he/she may immediately drop back to act as a defender with no offside penalty enforced.



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## **RECEIVING**

All players are eligible receivers.

Only one player allowed in motion at a time and must be parallel to the line of scrimmage.

A player must have at least one foot in bounds when making a reception.

In the case of simultaneous possession the offense is awarded possession.

Interceptions can be returned and result in a change of possession.

Interceptions on an extra point can be returned for a touchdown count towards the opposing teams score in the amount that the try was worth.

## **FLAG PULLING**

A legal flag pull takes place when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball.

Defenders cannot tackle, hold or interfere with the ball carrier in the pursuit of getting the flag.

It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball carriers possession at any time.

If the ball carrier's flag falls off inadvertently while carrying the ball the player must be touched by the defensive team (1 hand) and is ruled down at that spot. If a receiver catches a pass and his flags have already fallen off it is a dead ball at the spot he catches it.

A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of players who are not in possession of the ball.

## **FORMATIONS**

An offensive team must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage (the center).

The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage, behind the center or in the shot gun.

No handoffs are allowed back to the center from the quarterback during the set formations.

## **SPORTSMANSHIP/ROUGHING**

If the field monitor or referee witnesses any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking 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, coaches, or spectators will be ejected from the game.



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## **PENALTIES**

All penalties will be called by the referee.

### **Defense: all penalties are for 5 yards and automatic first down**

- **Offsides:**
- **Interference:**
- **Illegal contact (holding, blocking, etc.):**
- **Illegal FLAG pull (before receiver has ball):**
- **Illegal rushing (starting rush from inside 7 – yard marker):**
- **Stripping the ball**
- **Roughing the passer**

### **Offense: all penalties are for 5 yards and loss of down**

- **Illegal forward pass:** (pass thrown beyond line of scrimmage)
- **Offensive pass interference:**
- **FLAG guarding:**
- **Delay of game:**
- **Charging**

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 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.



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## UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

- A. Swearing, obscene language or unsportsmanlike behavior, etc. either on or off the playing field by the players, coaches or spectators, **WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.** No player may show baiting, taunting acts, or words which endangers ill will. Also, any delayed, excessive, or prolonged act, by which a player attempts to focus attention upon him or herself, will face possible ejection from the game or league. Furthermore, should a team display any of the misconduct stated above, the entire team will be subject to ejection from the game or league.
- B. At the conclusion of every game, teams will congratulate each other by shaking hands. All coaches and officials will observe the conduct of the players at this time.
- C. Any player caught doing an unsportsmanlike act will be suspended from playing in the next scheduled game, and the coach in charge of the team will receive an employee warning. If there is a second offence by the same player, they will be suspended for the next two games, and the coach may be suspended without pay for a period of one week. If there is a third offence by the same player, they will be suspended for the remainder of the season, and the coach may be terminated.
- D. An unsportsmanlike act includes, but is not limited to:
  - 1. Refusing to shake hands.
  - 2. Spitting on their hands before shaking hands.
  - 3. Spitting on the opposing team/officials.
  - 4. Intentionally bumping players of the opposing team/officials.
  - 5. Taunting, baiting, or confronting their opponent, officials, coaches, or fans.
  - 6. Showboating, swearing, or using inappropriate gestures at their opponent, officials, coaches, or fans.
  - 7. Taking a swing at an opponent/official or fighting.



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## FIELD

The recommended field size is 30 yards by 70 yards with two 10 yard end zones and a midfield line to gain or dimensions approved by YMCA Sports Director. No running zones proceed each line to gain by 5 yards. Each offensive team approaches only two know run zones in each drive (one zone 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down and one zone 5 yards from the goal line.)

## FIELD DIMENSIONS

