



# YMCA Jr. Huskers Recreational Flag Football Rules

## YMCA GOAL

- The YMCA goal is to give every child between Grades 1<sup>st</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> a chance to play flag football. Each child should have the opportunity to learn flag football skills, sportsmanship, and working together as a team. This will allow for the promotion of new friendships, create positive family reactions, and to have fun.

## PERSONNEL

- The YMCA plays in a 6v6 league. This means the offense and defense will field six players each
- If needed, a team may field 5 to start the game on time.

## PLAYING FIELD

- 1<sup>st</sup> Grade: Playing field will be 40 yards in total with one first down marker and two goal line markers. Will have 4 total attempts to make it to the first down marker, where the team will decide to punt or go for the 1<sup>st</sup> down.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade: Playing field will be 60 yards in total with two first down marker's and two goal line markers. Will have 4 total attempts to make it to the first down marker, where the team will decide to punt or go for the 1<sup>st</sup> down.
- If hash marks are present, the ball will be placed on the nearest hash mark upon the ball carrier being called down. T

## PLAYING TIME GUIDELINES

- All players must play at minimum half of a game, where the participant must take the field each half: the only exception of the ruling is poor behavior, lack of attendance, etc. \* This is determined by the volunteer coach \*
- Each player must start one game throughout the season. The coach may alternate his starting line-up every week.
- Offense and Defense will be given the opportunity to substitute at any point during the game. Must notify official.
- Each player must be given the opportunity to play ever 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. Must rotate backfield, line, and Wide Receiver position. (Any issue of playing time please contact the YMCA Youth Sports Office)

## EQUIPMENT

- Player must wear the YMCA Flag Football Reversible Jersey.
  - Home = **Red**                      Away = **Black**
- Mouth Guard must be worn at all times while on the field.
- Football cleats or tennis shoes can worn. No Steel Spiked cleats allowed.
- Ball Size:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade – PeeWee Football
  - 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Grade – TD Junior Football
  - 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade – TD Youth Football
- Flag belts must be worn at all times. No tying, tucking, or hiding the Flag Belts. Will result in Unsportsmanlike conduct.
  - Will be available on the playing field before game starts; must returned after game ends

## GAME LENGTH

- Will consist of two 24-minute halves with a 3-minutes halftime. Allotted one timeout per half (1 minute)
- Offensive team will be given 30 seconds to call a play. Delay of game will be called.
- 30-second play clock will begin once the official has marked the defensive line. This will be indicated by a raised arm.
- Successive delay of games in order to run the clock out will result in a loss of down and unsportsmanlike conduct.
  - Please remember the game is time limited. We want to promote as much playing time as possible.

## SCORING

- The YMCA does not keep track of official scores in the Recreation League, but as a coach you are more than welcome.
- A touchdown will be a result of the offense team crossing the designated goal line during a live play. 6 points.
- After the initial touchdown the offense may either go for one or two points:
  - **New: 1 point awarded from a successful try (pass or run) from the 3 yard line and 2 points awarded from the 10 yard line**
- A Safety will be awarded to the defensive if a sack or tackle for a loss is behind the offense's team goal line. 2 points.
  - The defense will then be rewarded with the ball on their 10-yard line
- If the defense is to intercept the ball and return past the offense goal line, the defense will be awarded a touchdown. 6 points.

## START OF GAME

- The official for the game will check all of the players regarding the specific equipment rules, by then proceeding to grab the captains of both teams for the "coin-flip".
- The captain who wins the "coin-flip" choose either possession or what goal line to defend. The opposing team will receive the opposite.
- There will be no Kick-Off. The team that chose to receive will field the ball on their 10-yard line to begin the game and will swap fields to start the second half.

## PENALTIES

- **Offside:** 5 Yard Penalty on both Offense and Defense
  - Offense: Early movement on line or backfield before the ball is snapped
  - Defense: Movement past the Defensive Line before the ball is snapped
- **Illegal Motion:** 5 Yard Penalty
  - Offensive player who are in motion toward the line of scrimmage during the snap.
- **Unnecessary Roughness:** 10 Yards Penalty from the point of the infraction on both Defense and Offense
  - An action where a player uses unnecessary force or methods to grab the flag or blocking another player
- **Unsportsmanlike Conduct:** 10 Yard Penalty on both Offense and Defense
  - Swearing, intentional fumbling, intentional early pull of flag, and spiking
  - No showboating. We want to make sure the kids are having fun and not being demoralized.
- **Flag Guarding:** 5 yard Penalty from spot of foul
  - Ball carrier guarding their flag by swiping hands, tying belt, attempting to hurdle over the defense, stiff-arm, and etc.
  - If penalty occurs after the first down marker, offense will be awarded the 1<sup>st</sup> down.
- **Illegal Blocking:** 10 yard Penalty from LOS
  - Blocking is allowed, but the use of hands will be penalized. Players must have their hands behind their back when blocking.
  - Player may not cross arms, extend arms, use hands, or dip shoulder
    - This is to help prevent any use of the hands, elbows, and arms.
- **Delay of Game:** 5 Yard Penalty on Offense only
  - Not snapping the ball off before the 30-second timer ends, which starts after the defensive line is set.
- **Holding:** 10 Yard Penalty on both Offense and Defense
  - Offense: Use of hands during a live play, by grabbing another player or body. 10 yards from the LOS.

- Defense: Holding on to an offensive player blocking or route running. 10 yards from the spot of the ball with an automatic first down.
- **Pass Interference:** 5 Yard Penalty
  - Offense: Illegal use of hands by the Receiver to gain separation. 5 Yards loss from LOS and loss of down
  - Defense: Illegal use of hands by the Defender to prevent route or catch. 5 yard from spot of foul and first down.
- **Illegal Forward Pass:** 5 Yard Penalty and loss of down
  - Passing the ball after the ball carrier has crossed the line of scrimmage.
- **Intentional Grounding:** 5 Yard Penalty and loss of down
  - IF the QB intentionally throws the ball away with no receiver in the area to prevent the defender from getting a sack.

\*NOTE\* If the ball is on the 5-yard goal line, then defensive fouls will net half the distance to the goal.

## OFFENSE

- Must have only three players on the Line of Scrimmage (LOS) before the ball is snapped, a center and two additional players anywhere on the LOS. The player at the Center position must snap the ball to a player in the backfield and may not run with the ball.
- Yards gained by offense player will be determined by the ball carrier's body position rather than the ball position, extension of ball does not extend the amount of yards gained.
- Grades 1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>: Quarterback CANNOT directly run with ball past the LOS immediately after the ball has been snapped. Must handoff, pitch, toss, or pass the ball to another player.
- Grades 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>: Quarterback CAN directly run with the ball after the ball has been snapped.
- All backs that received the ball upon QB exchange can pass, pitch, toss, pass, or run with the ball.
- Only one back may be in motion at the time of the ball being snapped. The player must be 1-yard from the LOS upon the ball being snapped, and may not be running toward the LOS. Result will be illegal
- 1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade: Any snapped ball that touches the ground before touching a player will be repeated with no huddle. May have up to two attempts before a loss of down is penalized.
- 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade: Any snapped ball that touches the ground before touching a player will result in a loss of a down.
- If the ball at any point touches the ground during a live play, the ball is dead. There are no fumble recoveries in YMCA Flag Football. The team that fumbled will retain possession of the ball, but will play off the spot of the fumble where it was behind the LOS or past the LOS.
- The "Hide Out Play" is not allowed. This is defined by fake substituting an offense play to the sideline to then streak down the field.

## BALL CARRIER

- May not protect their own flag belt in any way. Hands and arms must be kept above the waist, where Flag Guarding will be called.
- Ball carrier's teammates must attempt not to run alongside the ball carrier. If this is, being taken advantage of a Flag Guard penalty will be called.
- The ball carrier is allowed to spin or jump cut (laterally or backwards) in order to evade defenders.
- The ball carrier may not attempt to hurdle or run through a defender to gain progression of the play.

## BLOCKING

- Players must have their hands behind their back when engaged in blocking another player. They may not be folded across their chest.
- There will be no contact blocking made by an offensive player. A pick or screen is allowed, as long as the player has their hands behind their back.
- May move their body in form of a moving screen or pivot around to impede the oncoming rusher, but may not extend arms or block through an oncoming rusher. May not hold, chip block, or crack back the opposing team.
- Blockers may not dip their shoulder or head while blocking of defenders. They may not run and block alongside the ball carrier. They cannot form a wall around the ball carrier while they are running to advance play.

- Any rough tactics, such as trying to block through, push with hands, use of extended fist or elbows, or any contact to the opposing players head with open hands will be unnecessary roughness.

## PASSING

- May only forward pass the ball past the LOS, if the ball is thrown after crossing the LOS an Illegal Forward Pass will be called
- Once the ball has snapped, any player on offense is now considered eligible to receive the football.
- Any number of passes may be made behind the LOS as long as they are backwards passes.

## DEFENSE

- The official will set the defensive line 5-yards off the line of scrimmage. Once the line has been set, defensive players must stay behind the line until the ball has been snapped. Will be penalized for early rush.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Grade: Only two players may cross the defensive line to rush the QB after the ball has been snapped. If the ball has been transferred possession from the QB to another player then all defensive players may rush the backfield
  - 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> Grade: No limit to the amount of players who can rush the QB after the ball has been snapped.
- 1<sup>st</sup> Down / Goal Line Defense:** If the offense is within 5-yards of the first down marker or goal line the defense may set up to two players on the LOS to defend against the run. The two players on the LOS may not cross the LOS until the ball has been exchanged from the QB to another player. The remaining defensive players must remain behind the defense line, but two players may still rush.
- Defense cannot run through the defenders. Bull rush/throwing kids will result in unnecessary roughness.
  - The goal is to limit the amount of contact between players. Defense should go around blockers.

## DOWNING THE BALL CARRIER

- The ball carrier will be considered “down” upon the flag belt being removed from the player. This includes whether the flag was pulled or fell off on its own. The play is dead, and the ball carrier is down where the flag was pulled or where it touched the ground.
  - Defensive players must hand back the flag. May not throw flag away from the offensive player. Unsportsmanlike Conduct.
  - Receiver may still make an attempt of the ball if flag has fallen off before possession. Is down upon catching the ball.
  - If the ball carrier knee or arm touches the ground at any point, they are deemed down from the spot of the touch.
- The Defensive player must not hold, push, run through, or stop the progression of the ball carrier. They must “play on the flag rather than the ball carrier”.
- May not strip the football of the defender to try and force a turnover. The play is marked dead at that point.

## PUNTING

- A team may punt at any point during their possession, but must inform the official and the opposing team
  - 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Only: May go for the first down marker or give up the ball to the opposing team on opposite 10 yard line (1<sup>st</sup> Grade) or 20 yard line (2<sup>nd</sup> Grade)
- No attempt to rush the kicker or blocking of the punt. If so, the ball will be re-kicked.
- If the punt is not fielded by the receiving team, and goes out of bounds or touches the ground the receiving team will field the ball on the spot of the ground or out of bounds spot
- Kicking team may not cross the LOS until the ball has been kicked
- A punt that is down in the end zone will be field at their 10-yard line.

## COACHES CONDUCT

- Coaches are expected to adhere to YMCA philosophies, coaching guidelines and codes of conduct
- Grades 1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup>: One coach is allowed to be on the field for offense and defense.
- Grade 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>: First TWO games only, ONE coach is allowed to be on the field for offense and defense.