

YOUTH SPORTS FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

1. PLAYERS

- A) Players may participate in only 1 organized Flag Football League/Division/Team sponsored by the City of Torrance Community Services Department. Players who are currently playing organized tackle football are eligible to play Flag Football.
- B) Once a player requests a refund, he/she cannot sign up again for that current season.
- C) Players may play in one division higher but can't play in a lower division.
- D) A coach cannot add players to their own team.
- E) The maximum amount of players per team is 16.
- F) A team must have 5 players to start a game. After a grace period of 5 minutes, a scrimmage game will be played.

2. SUBSTITUTIONS

- A) Substitutions are unlimited.
- B) Every player in attendance must play for a minimum 10 minutes per half.
- C) If the officials call a timeout due to an injured player, that player must sit out the following play unless there is a team time out.

3. EQUIPMENT

- A) All players must wear rubber-soled gym shoes or rubber cleats. Bare feet, street shoes or metal cleats are not permitted. Helmets and shoulder pads are not permitted.
- B) **Red or yellow shorts or shorts with stripes cannot be worn during a game.**
- C) Players may not wear baseball caps, bandanas, or jewelry of any sort during games. ***All participants are strongly recommended to wear a mouth guard .***
- D) All game balls will be provided by the City of Torrance Community Services Department. The ball sizes for each division are listed below:

Grades K-3	Pee Wee
Grades 4-5	Junior
Grades 6,7&8	Intermediate

- E) Shirts **must be** tucked into shorts, **if not tucked in this will result in a 10 yard penalty from the line of scrimmage. The down will remain the same.**
- F) The City of Torrance Community Services Department will provide teams with official belts and flags for use during league games. Flags and flag belts cannot be covered by the shirt to interfere with the ability of removing the flag. Belts must be visible not tucked under the shirt Failure to follow this rule will result in an unsportsmanlike penalty.

4. GENERAL RULES

- A) All players must be listed on the “Official Team Roster” form.
- B) Grade levels will be combined based on enrollment.
- C) **ALL PLAYERS MUST HAVE A CITY ISSUED UNIFORM IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN EACH GAME.** If uniform shirt is lost or misplaced, a replacement must be purchased for \$7.00 prior to the start of the game.
- D) Coaches playing ineligible players will be suspended for an indefinite period of time. The ineligible player will also be suspended and not allowed to play during the current season.
- E) Questions regarding the eligibility of players may be raised verbally at any time by a coach or league staff.

5. GAME CLOCK

- A) Games will be played in 25-minute running halves.
- B) The clock is running for the entire game until the last 2 minutes of the second half at which point it will stop for time-outs, scoring, penalties, out-of-bounds, incomplete passes or change of possession if the point spread is 12 points or less.
- C) There will be a halftime of approximately 3 minutes between the halves.
- D) Time expiration of either half with a defensive penalty gives the offense the choice to accept the penalty and have one final untimed offensive play, or end the half.
- E) There will be **no** overtime period.

6. HALFTIME

A 3 minute rest period will be allowed at halftime.

7. TIME-OUTS

- A) Each team is allowed (2) 30 second time-outs per half. Any team ahead by 17 or more points may not call a time-out.

- B) In case of emergency or injury, an official time-out will be called. Any player responsible for an official time-out must leave the field for at least 1 play.

8. KICKING

- A) Grades K-5 - There will be no kick-offs. Instead, the ball will be placed on the 15-yard line to begin the game, after halftime and following a score. There are no free kicks on safeties. If the point spread becomes 12 points or more, the team that is down will start at the midfield zone line.
- B) Grades 6-8 - Kick-offs will be from the first zone line. Tees will be provided.
- C) Grades K-5- have the option to punt or forfeit possession of the ball AND advance it 15 yards. If within the final 2 zone lines the advancement of the ball will be half the distance to the goal.
- D) On kicks, any ball in the end zone will result in a touchback.
- E) All kicked balls are live. Any dropped ball will be ruled dead when a defensive player enters a ten yard “safety halo.” Offensive players may pick up a dropped kick.

9. SCORING

Touchdown	Six Points
Conversion (3 yards)	One Point
Conversion (7 yards)	Two Points
Safety	Two Points

- A) Point after touchdown - The scoring team will request a conversion try of 1 or 2 points. They have 1 offensive play to score.
- B) Safety - Occurs when an offensive ball carriers flag is pulled in the end zone, runs out of the end zone or drops the ball into/out of the end zone.

10. HUDDLES

- A) The offensive team **must form a huddle** prior to every offensive play: all 8 players within arm’s distance and minimum 5 yards from the sideline. Illegal huddles will result in a 5 yard penalty from the line of scrimmage. The down will remain the same.
- B) During the last 2 minutes of the second half, teams do not need to huddle prior to running an offensive play.

11. PUTTING THE BALL INTO PLAY

Grades K-5	35 seconds
Grades 6-8	25 seconds

- A) The ball is put into play with a snap from the center between their legs. No center sneak is allowed.
- B) The center may adjust the ball prior to the snap.
- C) After touching the ball, the center cannot remove their hands or move the ball to simulate a snap. This will result in a false start penalty.
- D) Failure to put the ball into play in the designated time will result in a delay of game penalty.

Motion - 1 offensive player may be in a lateral or backwards motion at the time of the snap/hike. Player can only go in motion when the quarterback calls "motion." In addition NO offensive players on L.O.S. within 2 yards of ball may go in motion once they've come set.

- E) Defensive team may not vocalize snap count/call or attempt to keep offensive team from hearing the snap count/call. This will result in an unsportsmanlike penalty 15 yards.

12. DOWNS

- A) An offensive team has 4 downs to advance the ball from the point of possession to the next forward zone line to get another set of downs. If the team fails to reach the zone line in 4 downs, the opposing team will take possession at the point of the last dead ball.
- B) If the offensive team passes a zone line and then commits a penalty moving them behind that same zone line, they will need 2 zone lines to gain a first down.
- C) A team may choose to punt on the 4th down rather than attempting to reach the next forward zone line. Punts must be declared prior to breaking the huddle. No snap/hike is required on punts; the punter may pick up the ball prior to kicking it. Procedure penalties are in effect for the offense during punts.
- D) 5 defensive players must be on the L.O.S. prior to a punt.

13. OFFENSIVE TEAM

- A) **Grades K-1** - The ball carrier **may not** run up the middle. The middle is defined as between the guard positions and will be marked by cones 5 feet on either side of the center.
- B) **Grades K-1** - The Quarterback may only direct run once per series.
- C) **Grades 2-8** - **Running up the middle is permitted.**
- D) Office of line must lineup at least a center at minimum.

14. PASSING

- A) All players on the offensive team are eligible to receive passes.
- B) A catch is the act of establishing possession of a live ball in flight. If a player attempts to catch a ball while they are in the air, they must contact the playing surface with one foot for the catch to be legal. Referee judgment will decide if a player would have made a legal catch prior to an opponent's contact.
- C) Only one (1) forward pass can be thrown per down.
- D) If a defensive player is within 5 yards of the quarterback, any attempt to block a pass behind the line of scrimmage will result in an **ILLEGAL PASS BLOCK**. The defender should be going for the flags, not the ball.

15. BLOCKING

- A) Offensive players may only use standing blocking techniques.
- B) Any blocks below the waist or from behind are illegal and will result in an unsportsmanlike penalty.
- C) Players may contact the opponent's body between the shoulders and waist, provided the technique is legal. The legal techniques are as follows:
 - Extending the arms is allowed, as long as contact with the defensive player is kept while arms are extended.
 - Offensive player may "drive" the defensive player but may not push or shove away.
 - Hands shall remain inside the frame of the blocker and opponent's body.
 - Slapping or striking is not allowed.

16. DOWNING THE BALL CARRIER

- A) In order to down a ball carrier, either flag must be pulled from the belt by an opponent.
- B) In the case where a flag is missing or flags are not along the ball carrier's sides, contact by an opposing player will result in downing of the ball carrier.
- C) A downed ball carrier will give the ball to the closest referee. Failure to do so promptly will result in a **delay of game penalty**.

17. **PENALTIES/UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT**

A) Ball Carrier

- Running over or through a defensive player
- Running up the middle (grades K-1)
- Using their hands or ball to shield their flags from a defensive player
- Pushing their blockers with their free hand
- Leaving their feet to avoid having their flags pulled

C) Offensive Team

- No huddle
- More than 1 forward pass
- Multiple QB direct runs (grades K-1)
- Simulated snap
- Illegal blocking technique
- More than one person in motion at the same time
- Player can only go in motion when the quarterback calls “motion.” In addition, NO offensive players on L.O.S. within 2 yards of ball may go in motion once they’ve come set.

D) Defensive Team

- Rushing up the middle/between the cones (grades K-1)
- Blocking a pass within 5 yards of the quarterback
- Not making a play for the flag of a ball carrier
- Pushing a ball carrier out of bounds
- Vocalizing/movement to simulate offensive snap/hike (See “Putting The Ball into Play”)

D) General

- Inappropriate language/taunting
- Disrespecting referees
- Teams being outside of designated area (on the sidelines)

18. **EJECTIONS**

- Any player, coach or parent/guardians can be ejected at the referee’s discretion for any unsportsmanlike conduct.
- 2 unsportsmanlike conduct calls will result in ejection from the game and the Youth Sports Disciplinary Committee will review the incident.

Any player, coach or parent/guardian ejected from a game will also be suspended from their next scheduled game or longer. If the game is the last of the season, the suspension will be for the first game of the next year that the player/coach/parent/guardian participates. A suspended player/coach/parent/guardian shall not be allowed where the game is being played or have any contact with their team for the entire duration of the game in which they are suspended. Depending on the circumstance, the suspension could be for more than one game upon review by the Youth Sports Disciplinary Committee.

19. COACHES

- A) Only 1 coach and 1 assistant coach are allowed in the team designated area on the sidelines
- B) Grades K-1 – 2 coaches are allowed on the field during the game.
- C) Grades 2 & 3 – 1 Coach is allowed on the field for the first 3 games.
- D) Coaches are not to taunt, approach or argue with the opposing coach, spectators or officials. Coaches may ask for an explanation, and it will be given at the official's discretion.
- E) Family, friends and associates are the responsibility of the head coach.
- F) Unnecessary taunting or arguing with officials and/or the opposing team, coach or spectators may result in an unsportsmanlike penalty and ejection. This applies to coaches, players and spectators.

20. DECISIONS OF THE OFFICIALS

- A) The decision of the officials is FINAL.
- B) All rule interpretations will be made at the time they occur.
- C) The only grounds for a protest will be on the eligibility of a player. A protest must be submitted in writing to the City of Torrance Community Services Department by 5:00 p.m. on the next working day.

21. LEAGUE STANDING TIE BREAKER

- A) Head to head record against all tied teams
- B) Most wins throughout the regular season
- C) Coin Flip

22. RULE UPDATES

Rules are subject to change at any time by Youth Sports Staff. Any updates to the rules will be posted on the Flag Football webpage. Coaches will be notified.

