

Junior Football League of Central Illinois

“Flag Football”

RULES

Rule 1: Players

Article 1-Ages and Divisions:

There will be two (2) divisions of play:

Mighty Mites and Midgets

Mighty Mites will consist of all players age five (5) and six (6). **NO SEVEN (7) YEAR OLDS.**

Midgets will consist of all players age six (6) and seven (7). **NO FIVE (5) YEAR OLDS.** Age as of August First, of the current year (age cut off date) will determine which division of play for each participant.

Once a player plays up, he must stay at this level of play.

Article 2-Validation and Rosters

1. Each team roster shall have a minimum of twelve (12) players, and a maximum of sixteen (16) players. In the event an area has more than sixteen (16) players but not enough for two (2) teams, the Infractions Committee will address this at that time in a special meeting.
2. Only players appearing on the official team roster are to be counted as players. This form (roster) is to be completed before the first game of the season and verified by the Area Flag Director in a process called “Validation.”

Area Directors must insure that they have the following properly completed documentation on each of their players:

- a. Completed registration form,
- b. Valid proof of age in one of the following forms:
 1. Birth Certificate,
 2. Baptismal Certificate,
 3. Public Aid Card,
 4. School Letter, complete with name and age, signed by principal

Completed roster for each team with player’s names listed in alphabetical order by their last name. All coaches must be listed in alphabetical order on their team roster also.

Article 3-The Game:

3. A game is played between two teams consisting of eight (8) players each.
4. The **OFFENSIVE** team must have five (5) players on the line of scrimmage, of which the three (3) middle players must be in a two (2) point stance and are ineligible receivers. The middle three (3) players must space themselves by extending each arm out to the next player's fingertips (finger-tips to finger-tips).
The two outside players (wide receiver(s) and/or tight end(s) may split out and/or line up along side the outside lineman mentioned above. There must be three (3) players in the back field.

The **DEFENSIVE** team must play a three (3) man front, head-to-head, over the inside offensive linemen, on the line of scrimmage at the time of the snap. In addition, there must be three (3) players on the second line, three (3) yards off the line of scrimmage and two (2) players on the third line, seven (7) yards off the line of scrimmage.

The second line and third line players may position themselves anywhere parallel to the line of scrimmage as long as they stay within the three (3) yard and seven (7) yard increments.

This type of Flag Defense is known as a 3-3-2.

5. A team will have thirty (30) seconds to put the ball in play after the ready signal.
6. **Every** player **must** play a minimum of two (2) full quarters.
7. **No player can play the same position more than one (1) quarter of the game. Thus, the player must switch (rotate) positions.** (Promote awareness of game)

Rule 2: Playing Field

1. The field shall be rectangular with lines and zones. The field will measure fifty (50) yards in length, divided into five (5) zones, and thirty (30) yards in width.
2. Goal posts are unnecessary as points after touchdown (PAT) are only made by passing or running and there are no field goals kicked.
3. A zone line to gain will be used to indicate the distance to go for a first down.
4. Zone line to gain is defined as: The next line on the playing field in the direction of, and parallel to, the opponent's goal line. The down box is stationed at the zone line to gain.

Rule 3: Equipment

1. **Game Ball:** Tachikara SF2R, Junior Ball measuring approximately 8 ¼" x 4 ½".
2. **Flags:**
 - A. Three flags will be attached to a belt and extend or hang from each side of the player's body and from the rear of the player's body.
 - B. Flags will be 14 to 20, or when fully extended, no more than five (5) inches from the ground, and a minimum of 2 inches wide.
 - C. Flags cannot be the same color as their respective color of shorts, football pants or sweatpants.

- D. The belt must be tight. If need be, wrap athletic tape on each side of the Velcro holder to keep flags in position. (So they won't bunch together)
- E. Jerseys (T-shirts) cannot be worn over the flags.
- F. If the player's flag is inadvertently lost, he is ineligible to handle the ball.
- G. If the flag comes off the ball carrier for any reason during play, the ball is blown dead.

3. **Game Uniforms:**

- A. Each team must wear the same color jersey. (T-shirt)
- B. Jerseys (T-shirts) will be tucked in at all times.
- C. Any type of pants may be worn.
- D. Sneakers and/or soccer shoes are the preferred.
- E. Mouth guards are optional, parents' discretion.
- F. To better differentiate between offensive and defensive players, defensive linemen will be required to wear; one (1) white wristband to identify himself or herself as a defensive lineman. Colored wrist bands may be used to help identify and teach positions.

4. **Prohibited Equipment:**

- A. Spiked (steel) or street shoes.
- B. Padding of any kind, including hard surface padding such as shoulder pads, casts, hip pads and helmets.
- C. Hard metal or any other hard substance on a player's clothing or person.
- D. Any equipment, in the opinion of the referee, which will endanger players.
- E. No Jewelry.

Rule 4: Referees

1. There will be two officials (one coach from each team or other teams shall act as referees) appointed prior to the game by the site director.
2. Each official will carry a yellow flag and drop it when an infraction occurs.

Rule 5: The Rules of the Game

Article 1—General Notes:

1. The free substitution rule is always in effect and a player may enter the game any time the ball is dead.
2. All players, except the three (3) blocking offensive linemen, are eligible to run or receive the ball.
3. An unlimited number of coaches for each team will be permitted on the field. (Whatever it takes to accomplish the objective of coaching)
4. A game will consist of four- (4) fifteen- (15) minute running quarters, stopping for injuries.
5. Five (5) minutes between halves. One (1) minute between quarters.
6. One timeout per each half of play.

7. Water Breaks: For unusual heat or humidity, which may create a health risk to the players.

Article 2--Start of the Game:

8. The referee will toss a coin to decide who will start the game on offense. The other team will start the second half on offense.
9. The offensive team will start on its own ten- (10) yard line. The same procedure will be followed after a safety.

Article 3--Punting:

10. No punts will be allowed. See rule twelve (12) below.

Article 4--Down and Zone to go:

11. Each team will have four (4) downs to advance the ball into the next zone or to score a touchdown.
12. Once a team enters the next zone, it is first down and a new series of downs begins.
13. A team failing to move the ball into the next zone will lose possession. The opposing team takes over and begins its series of first down and zone to go from their own ten-(10) yard line.
14. The forward part of the ball touching any line will be the determining factor in measuring for a first down.
15. When the offensive team is within the last zone and has a first down, it will be first down and goal to go.
16. At the conclusion of each down, the referee will place the ball in the center of the field.

Article 5--De-Flagging:

17. There shall be **NO TACKLING!**
18. The player carrying or having possession of the ball is down when the flag is removed from his waist (de-flagging). The defensive player shall hold the flag above his head and stand still.
19. The defensive player cannot hold or push the ball carrier to remove his flag. A defensive player may not run over, push, or pull a blocker away from him.
20. A defensive player must go for the passer's flag. He cannot touch the passer's arm.

Article 6--Blocking:

21. A blocker must be on his feet at all times while blocking. All linemen, except the center, must not assume the three-point stance. They must simply stand at the line of scrimmage and await the snap. The center, if he is to block, must first stand straight up.
22. Cross blocking and roll blocking are not allowed.

23. A blocker cannot use his hands, or stiff arm.
24. Shadow blocking defined as legally obstructing an opponent without contacting him with any part of the body. (Arms not extended and grabbing his shirt and maintaining this form of blocking until the end of the play.) This is also known as brush blocking.
25. A defensive player cannot block or push a ball carrier out-of-bounds.
26. Only one-on-one blocking will be allowed at all times. There will be **no** two-on-one blocking.
27. Blocking a player from behind is not permitted.
28. Once the ball crosses the line of scrimmage, the “one-two-three, GO”, count is waived.

Article 7--Ball Carrier:

29. The ball carrier cannot use his hands or arms to protect his flags. The defensive player must have the opportunity to remove the ball carrier’s flags.
30. The ball carrier cannot lower his head to drive or run into a defensive player.
31. The ball carrier cannot hurdle to prevent a defensive player from removing his flags.
32. The ball carrier may not run straight ahead. Straight ahead is defined as inside the opposing team’s guard, nose guard and second guard. (Runners may not run up the middle) once the runner crosses the line of scrimmage, he may run in any direction until the ball is declared dead.

Article 8--Ball Carrier, Quarterback:

33. Only the three (3) down lineman, on defense, may rush the quarterback after waiting for the “one-two-three, GO” count, after the snap of the ball.

Article 9--Center:

34. The center may snap the ball between his legs or stand to either side of the ball and “flip” the ball. This is known as the “back-yard” snap. He may also snap the ball directly to the quarterback when the quarterback is directly behind the center.
35. No touching the center until he takes a step or assumes a blocking position.

Article 10--Passing:

36. All backfield men are eligible passers.
37. Passing will be attempted from behind the line of scrimmage only.
38. INTERCEPTIONS: The Defense may intercept a pass. Once intercepted, the ball is immediately “dead”, (The defense can not advance the ball) and placed at the “start line.”

Article 11--Receiving:

39. All players, except the three (3) blocking offensive linemen, are eligible to receive forward passes.

40. A receiver must catch the ball with at least one-foot in-bounds.
41. Two or more receivers may touch a ball in succession resulting in a completed pass.
42. If an offensive and defensive player catch a pass simultaneously, the ball is declared dead at the spot of the catch and the passing team is awarded possession.
43. An offensive player cannot go out-of-bounds and return in bounds, to catch a pass.

Article 12--Dead Ball:

44. All balls touching the ground are immediately dead. Examples:
 - A. When the ball carrier touches the ground with his body, other than hands or feet.
 - B. When the ball carrier's flag has been pulled.
 - C. When the ball goes out-of-bounds for any reason.
 - D. If the center snap hits the ground before reaching a backfield person.
 - E. When the ball hits the ground as a result of a fumble or "muffed" ball.

There are NO Fumble Recoveries in J.F.L. Flag Football!
 - G. If a lateral pass touches the ground. The ball is declared dead at that point.

Article 13--Tie Game:

45. Tie games will not be played off.

Article 14--Completion of the Game:

46. No score will be kept. Each team will be considered a winner! Each team will congratulate the other team upon completion of the game with a cheer and hand shake.

Article 15--Injured Players:

47. Once removed from a game because of injury, a player must sit out at least one play.

Articles 16--Practices:

48. A team may elect to start practice on Monday, August 13, 2012. (Four weeks prior to the first schedule league game) A maximum of twelve (12) practices may be conducted prior to the first scheduled league game.
49. Practice is defined as a gathering of players, without a minimum number, requiring the presence of at least one (1) coach.
50. A week is defined as being seven (7) consecutive calendar days.
51. After the season starts, practices will be two (2) days per week, not to exceed ninety (90) Minutes per practice.

Article 17--Schedules:

52. Each team will play ONE game on Saturdays for six (6) weeks. (Depending on the number of teams)
53. All Flag Football games will be grouped at one (1) or more sites, depending on the number of teams participating.
54. All participants must practice a minimum of one practice per week in order to play in a regular season scheduled game on Saturday. Area disciplinary reasons will override this rule. (See Article two (2) Rule six (6))

Article 18-Weather Policy

55. Teams need to show up at game sites and prepare to play. (Areas are so spread out; it may be raining in one location, but not at another site.) If "poor" weather exists at a game site, one coach from each team and the site director will discuss the situation and make a determination if the game shall be played and/or continued. The Site Director has final say.
56. Lightning / Thunder Rule: When THUNDER is heard, or a cloud-to-ground lightning bolt is seen, the Thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Suspend Play and take shelter immediately.

30 Minute Rule: Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or flash of lightening is witnessed prior to resuming play. Any subsequent thunder or lightning after the beginning of the 30 minute count reset the clock for another 30 minute count.

Don't be fooled by sunshine or blue sky!

Rule 6: Penalties

Since a smaller football field size is being used, penalties are adjusted accordingly.

The offended team will always have the choice of accepting or declining a penalty. When the penalty is greater than the distance to the goal line, the penalty shall be half the distance to the goal line.

Line of Scrimmage

Offside: Defensive or Offensive	3 Yards
Failure to observe 30 second rule	3 Yards
Illegal Motion-more than one man in motion	3 Yards
Illegal Formation	3 Yards

Passing:

Illegal Forward Pass:	3 Yards
Passer crosses scrimmage line:	3 Yards and Loss of Down
Intentional Grounding	5 Yards and Loss of Down
Offensive Pass Interference	10 Yards from line of scrimmage and Loss of Down
Defensive Pass Interference	First Down at Point of Infraction

Flag Wearing and De-Flagging

Any tackling	10 Yards
Wearing flags illegally	5 Yards
Ball Carrier using hands to prevent de-flagging	10 Yards
Holding, Pushing or hitting Ball Carrier	
While de-flagging	10 Yards from spot of foul
Intentionally wearing one or two flags	5 Yards

Illegal Hand-Off

If ball is handed forward beyond the Scrimmage Line	5 Yards
Handing or snapping ball to lineman	5 Yards

Blocking

Leaving Feet to Block	10 Yards
Cross Body Blocking	10 Yards
Illegal use of hands by blocker	10 Yards
Holding a defensive player	10 Yards
Defensive player blocking or pushing	
Ball carrier out-of-bounds	10 Yards
Butting, Elbowing or Knee Blocking	10 Yards
Defensive Player, Illegal use of hands	5 Yards
More than two blockers	10 Yards
Clipping	10 Yards

Ball Carrier

Stiff Arming	10 Yards
Lowering head to drive or run into defensive player	10 Yards
Use of head	10 Yards
Use of hand or arms to protect flags	10 Yards
Hurdling	5 Yards

Unnecessary Roughness

Offensive and Defensive	10 Yards
Second repeated offense by same player	10 Yards and Player Disqualification

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

Fighting	15 Yards and Player Disqualification
Defensive player pulling offensive players	
Flag to make him ineligible for play	10 Yards
Insulting, abusive language and spitting	10 Yards and one quarter suspension.
Illegal Play	10 Yards
Interference with progress of game by Coaches or other team personnel or parents	10 Yards and Disqualification
Any questioning of any officials' call	10 Yards

Offensive Positions in Flag Football

Quarterback

The quarterback lines up 5 to 10 yards behind the center in the offensive backfield, in what is sometimes called the shotgun formation. He should have the same attributes as a quarterback in tackle football.

Center

The center lines up on the line of scrimmage. He must be able to snap the ball back to the quarterback in a shotgun formation with speed and accuracy.

Blocking Backs

The blocking backs are eligible pass receivers, lined up in the offensive backfield about 3 to 5 yards from the line of scrimmage. Their job is to protect the quarterback and receive passes. They also may line up on the line of scrimmage (see spread formation) or be spread out (see triple wing formation).

Slot Receivers

The slot receivers take positions halfway between the center and wide receivers. They must be fast and agile with good receiving abilities.

Wide Receivers

The wide receivers take position on the outside ends of the line of scrimmage. They are usually the team's fastest players who can also run good patterns and have good hands.

Defensive Positions in Flag Football

Defensive End

The defensive ends are strong and quick players who rush the quarterback.

Nose Tackle

The nose tackle is strong, quick player who rushes the quarterback and stops the run.

Linebacker

They must be strong and quick with a keen sense of timing because they are in the middle of almost every play on defense.

Strong Safety

The strong safety is a defensive back that can double as a linebacker in certain defenses. He must be quick, agile, and strong enough to be able to cover and react to the ball.

Free Safety

The free safety is positioned at the deepest point of the defense. He is the last man between the defense and goal line. He must be a very smart player because his primary responsibility is to read and go to the ball. He must also be fast.

Cornerback

The cornerbacks must be the fastest players on defense because it is their responsibility to cover the fastest players on offense, the wide receivers. They must be able to read and react, but they must also be able to come up in certain situations if the offense is trying a trick play.