

MYFL Flag Football Rules

Spring 2015 Revision

Rules for the 10U, 12U, and 15U age groups

Section 1 – Eligibility

1. Eligibility – Players will be placed in division based on age as of December 31st, of the previous year.
2. Players will be allowed to “play up” into the next division if they are at the top of their officially assigned age group
3. Playing down is not permitted with the following exceptions
 - a. A female participant will be permitted to “play down” one division if she is at the lowest age in her officially assigned age group.
 - b. A male participant will be permitted to play down if he is physically unable to compete in his assigned division due to a diagnosed condition that prevents him from fairly competing in his assigned age division.

Section 2 – Division and Team Organization

1. Game play is 7 players vs. 7 players

2. Mandatory Play Policy

- a. Each player must have a starting position on offense or defense.
- b. Substitutions are allowed to speak with players, however a player must not sit out more than three consecutive plays during a series unless the player is injured or sick.
- c. The mandatory play rule does not apply to players that arrive at the game after the first half expires. While coaches are encouraged to have the player participate, playing time will be up to a coach's discretion.
- d. The mandatory play policy is to ensure that all players that signed up are treated in a fair manner, regardless of their ability and are given a chance to learn and participate in organized team sports. However, parent and players are encouraged not to abuse this rule and to attend practice on a regular basis and to communicate with a coach if s player is not going to attend a practice. However, if a coach feels that a player is abusing the league's mandatory play policy, the coach may petition the league, in writing, requesting that the rule be waived on a per player basis for one week. If the league grants the waiver to the participation rule, the coach must contact the player's parent and explain the reason for the one week waiver. The league will not participate in communication between coaches, players, and parents on the request to waive the participation rule on a per player basis
- e. Referees will not enforce this rule. This rule will be enforced by league officials based on complaints from parents, players, spectators, and other coaches. A formal complaint must be filed with a league official no later than Tuesday following the game in question and there

must be substantial and undisputable evidence. The burden of proof will fall on the party filing the protest.

- f. If the facts of a protest prove that a coach is found deliberately in violation of the participation rule that coach will forfeit the game.
3. Due to the Mandatory play policy, teams cannot consist of more than 14 players.
4. Teams are not allowed more than three days of activity per week. This would mean that a team is allowed two practices and one game per 7 day period.
 - a. Practice sessions are at the discretion of each head coach.
5. Each team can have up to 3 coaches on the sideline during a game.

Section 3 – Ball Sizes

The ball size for the 10U division is a “K-2” or “Pee-Wee”, the 12U division will use a “Junior” sized ball and the 15U use a “Youth” size or “NHFS” High School size ball.

Section 4 – Miscellaneous

1. Player must provide a colored mouth guard and a pair of rubber sole or plastic screw on type cleats. No clear mouth guards or metal baseball type cleats will be permitted.
2. If a player wears eyewear:
 - a. Eyewear must be secured by a strap.
 - b. No sunglasses are allowed, unless they are for prescription and then they must be secured by a strap.
3. Knee pads and elbow pad are allowed. However, a referee may inspect them at any time during the game and asked they be removed.
4. Gloves may be worn but must be regulation football type gloves and made of a soft, pliable, and non-abrasive material
5. Hats, headbands, and wristbands are permitted as long as there is no message, except for sports logo, on the item. No wristbands may be worn on the legs a referee or league official can asked that they be removed.
6. No jewelry of any type can be worn during the game.
7. If a player is injured before the game:
 - a. The cut or abrasion must be covered with appropriate dressing.
 - b. If a player has a cast, it must be covered with appropriate padding and has to be cleared by a referee for safe playing. If a referee does not approve the padding, the player will not be allowed to participate.
8. If a player gets injured during the game causing an open wound they will be asked to leave the game until the wound or abrasion is attended to and properly covered up.

Section 4 – Code of Conduct

1. Each player, parent, and coach is required to sign a code of conduct. Bad conduct will not be tolerated at all. If a player or a coach is ejected from the game, he or she will be restricted from playing the following week. If a player or coach is ejected a second time, they will not be allowed to return to return for the rest of the season.
2. There is a 4 play “cool down” period a referee can use to allow a player to calm down and return to play.
3. Examples of bad conduct are:
 - i. Arguing with a Referee of League Official
 - ii. Foul language or any obscene gesture
 - iii. Trash Talking (Trash talk is talk that may be offensive to officials, opposing players, teams or spectators), Taunting, and Showboating
 - iv. Fighting
 - v. Tackling
 - vi. Elbowing
 - vii. Cheap shots
 - viii. Intentional Blocking
 - ix. Clothes lining, kicking, or intentionally grabbing a players shirt
4. If a parent or spectator becomes disruptive, enters the coaching area, or enters the playing area a referee, coach, or league official will immediately talk to that person. If that person refuses to cooperate, they will be asked to leave the field. If they further refuse, Prince William County Park Police and Prince William County Police will be notified and that person will be removed and forbidden to return to Mayhew Football Fields for the rest of the season.

Section 5 - Game Play

General

1. The 10U, 12U, and 15U divisions play on a regulation youth size football field.
2. First possession is determined by a coin toss.
3. **Possession does NOT change after halftime. Play resumes exactly where it left off.**
4. A team must field 7 players at all times.
 - a. If a team cannot field a 7 player team at game time, they may petition the opposing coach and league commissioner to play with no less than 6 players. However, the opposing team may still play with 7 players. If the opposing coach refuses to play, the matter is dead and the team will forfeit the game.
5. Each player must have a set of flags.
 - a. Flags should be simple pull off flags that are made up of two flags.
 - b. Flags may not be black or the same color as the team’s uniform.
 - c. Shorts may not have a colored strip the same color as the flags.

- d. Flags are to be worn on the outside of the hips. *Example, if a player stands straight and puts their arms at their sides, the flags should be in line with their arms*
6. Players must tuck in their shirts so that the flags are visible.
 - a. A player may place their belt around the game shirt instead of tucking the shirt in as long as the shirt does not interfere with pulling the flags.

Offense

1. The official will place the ball in the center of the field, halfway between the hash mark at the start of each offensive series to begin play. The ball will be placed back in the center of the field after each offensive play. Ball is not to be placed on hash marks for play.
2. The offense will take the ball on the 5 yard line and has 3 downs to cross a first down marker. **Markers are at the 25, 50, and 25 yard lines.**
3. If the team fails to get a first down or score using, using 3 downs, the opposing team will take possession and start from their offensive series from their 5 yard line.
4. **There is a “NO RUN” zone within 5 yards of a first down and the goal line.**

*****No run zones are established to prevent “power running” the ball and for player safety*

5. The person with the ball may spin, **but jumping, hurdling, or diving to avoid a flag pull or to score is not allowed and the ball will be spotted at the point where the ball carrier leaves their feet. If it occurs at the goal line, the ball will be placed at the 5 yard line.**

****Note – A jumping call is at the discretion of the game official that makes the call. This call is a safety call to avoid injuries as a result of a player leaving his feet. In most cases, an official will not make the call if the jumping is not intentional and a result of normal running.*

6. Flag Guarding is prohibited.
7. Stiff-Arming is prohibited
8. If a ball is fumbled, it is dead.
9. **There is NO Blocking, “Screening” or intentional contact permitted.** Once the ball crosses the line of scrimmage, either by running or after a receiver catches a pass, all other players must stop or move away from the play. No player(s) may escort the ball carrier down the field of play. This also includes a group of players rushing the defensive players at that snap of the ball to intentionally provide a screen for the ball carrier
10. There is NO kicking or punting is permitted.
11. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time and they must move parallel or away from the line of scrimmage.
12. Center must center the ball in a regular style between his/her legs.
13. The quarterback is NOT allowed to run the ball unless he hands the ball to another player first.
14. All players are eligible to catch a pass, including the Quarterback once the ball is handed off.

15. All passing must be beyond the line of scrimmage – **NO screen passes allowed.**
16. Shovel passes are allowed, as long as they are beyond the line of scrimmage.
17. **PITCHING THE FOOTBALL OR LATERALS OF ANY TYPE ARE NOT PERMITTED**
***This is a safety consideration prevent a power running situation
18. Multiple hand-offs are permitted behind the line of scrimmage. However, once a player crosses the line of scrimmage, the ball cannot change possession to another player on the same team.
19. Once the ball is handed off, the ball carrier is eligible to run the ball or pass the ball beyond the line of scrimmage
20. The quarterback has a 7 second “pass clock” to pass the ball or hand it off. **Once the quarterback hands the off, the 7 second rule does not apply.**

Scoring

Touchdown – 6 points

Extra point – From the 5 yard line 1 point

Extra point – From the 12 yard line 2 points

Safety – 2 Points and the ball changes possession.

Defense

1. All players that rush the quarterback must be at least 7 yards from the line of scrimmage and the referees will mark that “the rush-line” with a marker before the ball is set.
2. Any number of players may rush the quarterback.
3. Players may not move past that “rush-line” until the ball is snapped.
4. After the quarterback hands the ball off, all players are eligible to rush the runner.
5. Any player not rushing may defend the line of scrimmage but **may not cross the line until the ball is handed off.**
6. **“Jamming” is not allowed and will result in an unsportsmanlike penalty**

This is a non-contact league and referees are going to be asked to enforce this rule with no exceptions for deliberate violations
7. If a ball is intercepted, it can be returned and will be spotted where the flags are pulled.
8. If a player's flags fall off, the ball is spotted where the flag falls.

Game Timing

1. Game Length in the 10U, 12U, and 15U divisions is 45 minutes total. This consists of **two 20 minute halves and a 5 minute half-time.**

2. **Games are played with a “Running Clock” except for the last 2 minutes of each half.** Within those times, the “High School Clock” will apply.
3. Referees can stop the clock at their discretion.
4. 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.
5. Time out periods will be allotted as follows:
 - a. (1) 60 second time out per half
 - b. (2) 30 second time out per half
 - c. The game clock will NOT stop during these periods except in the last two minutes of each half
 - d. Unused time outs do not carry over from the first half of play

Section 5 – Special Game Situations

Overtime

If a game requires an overtime period, the play will proceed as follows.

1. Coin toss determines first overtime possession.
2. Play will start at the defending team’s 20 yard line.
3. A team has 3 plays to score. After a team scores, they will have a try at extra points.
 - a. If both teams score or neither team scores, the game goes into the next overtime period
 - b. If one team does not score during the period, the game is over.
 - c. If the game is still tied after 3 overtime periods, it will be called a tie, unless it is a tournament game, then the game will be played until there is a winner.

ONE SIDED GAME RULE

Rule Conditions:

1. This rule will take effect if any team is winning by **25 points or more going into the second half**
2. This rule will also take effect if any team is winning by **30 points or more in the first half**

Rule:

If a team is winning by more than **twenty-five points in the second half or 30 points in the first half** then the following must happen:

- A. Losing team will start offensive play on the 50 yard line. The three down rule still applies.
- B. The winning team’s defense **cannot send ANY rushers into the backfield**
- C. The losing team’s defense **may now rush 5 yards from the line of scrimmage** into the backfield
- D. The clock cannot be stopped by the winning team with time outs

If a team is **winning by at least 35 points or more at any point in the game** the following must happen:

- A. **Losing team will start offensive play on the 20 yard line.** The three down rule still applies
- B. The winning team’s defense **cannot send ANY rushers into the backfield**
- C. The losing team’s defense may now **rush 5 yards from the line of scrimmage** into the backfield.

D. The clock cannot be stopped by the winning team with time outs

If a team is losing by at least 35 points with 5 minutes or less in the game, the referees will end the game.

PENALTIES

***These penalties are flag football specific, however it is important to note that officials will also be enforcing football other rules, as defined by the VHSL that would apply to normal football play (for example, out of bounds rules, catch rules, interference rules, etc.)

1. All Penalties will be called by the referee.
2. Referee will determine incidental contact caused by normal play
3. Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines the penalty
4. Only the team captain may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations
5. All Conduct violations will be 15 yard penalty

Part 1 - Defense

5 Yard Penalties

Offside	5 Yards from line of scrimmage
Illegal flag pull (before receiver has ball)	5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down

10 Yard Penalties

Pass Interference	SPOT FOUL – 10 Yards and automatic first down
Illegal contact (holding, blocking, etc.)	SPOT FOUL – 10 Yards and automatic first down
Illegal rushing (rush line violation)	10 yards on the end of the play or replay down

15 Yard Penalties

Unnecessary Roughness	15 Yards from the spot of the foul and automatic first down
Roughing the Passer	15 Yards on the end of the play and automatic first down. If play results in a touchdown, the 15 yard penalty will be assessed on the offending team's first offensive play after the extra point.
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	15 Yards on the end of the play and automatic first down. If play results in a touchdown, the 15 yard penalty will be assessed on the offending teams first offensive play after the extra point
Unsportsmanlike Conduct by a Coach	15 Yards on the end of the play and automatic first down. If play results in a touchdown, the 15 yard penalty will be assessed on the offending teams first offensive play after the extra point

Part 2 - Offense

5 Yard Penalties

Illegal motion (more than one person moving, false start, etc.)	5 Yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal forward pass (pass received behind line of scrimmage)	5 Yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Intentional Grounding	5 Yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down <i>**Intentional grounding will be called if the quarterback or passer throws the ball to avoid a sack and it does not cross the line of scrimmage or it is intentionally thrown out of bounds to avoid a sack</i>
Passing beyond the line of scrimmage	5 Yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down.
Delay of Game	10 Yards from loss of down

10 Yard Penalties

Offensive pass interference (illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender)	10 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Flag Guarding	SPOT FOUL – 10 Yards and loss of down
Screening, Blocking, or Running With Ball Carrier	SPOT FOUL - 10 Yards from the spot of the foul and loss of down. <i>***Screening or Blocking is defined as any offensive player that intentionally interferes with a defensive player's ability to pull the ball carriers flags. This could be a single player or a group of players that rush the defense at that snap of the ball. No offensive player can interfere with the defensive player's direct path to the flags</i>
Run Zone Violation	10 yards from the line of scrimmage, loss of down, and play remains in "No Run Zone"

15 Yard Penalties

Unnecessary Roughness (intentional contact such as roughing the passer, stiff arm, & tackling)	Spot Foul – 15 Yards and loss of down
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	15 Yards on the end of the play and loss of down. If play results in a touchdown, (i.e., after an interception) the 15 yard penalty will be assessed on the offending team's first offensive play after the extra point.
Unsportsmanlike Conduct by a Coach	15 Yards on the end of the play and loss of down. If play results in a touchdown, (i.e., after an interception) the 15 yard penalty will be assessed on the offending team's first offensive play after the extra point.
Taunting after a touchdown	15 yards on the point after attempt. If it occurs after the point after attempt, the extra point(s) will be negated,