

# **2018 GHYFL/APFL Flag Football Rules**

# 2018 GHYFL/APFL Flag Football Rules

## 1. Division and Team Organization

### 1.1. Game Play

- 1.1.1. 5-6 Division – 6 players vs. 6 players
- 1.1.2. 7-8 Division – 6 players vs. 6 players.
- 1.1.3. 9-10 Division – 8 players vs. 8 players.
- 1.1.4. 11-12 Division – 8 players vs. 8 players.
- 1.1.5. 13-15 Division – 8 players vs. 8 players.

1.2. Player must provide a colored mouthpiece, shorts or sweatpants with no pockets and a pair of rubber sole or screw on type cleats. No metal baseball type cleats are permitted.

### 1.3. Mandatory Play Policy:

- 1.3.1. Each player must have a starting position on offense or defense.
- 1.3.2. Substitutions are allowed to speak with players; however, a player must not sit out more than 3 consecutive plays during a series unless the player is injured or sick.
- 1.3.3. 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 at the coach's discretion.
- 1.3.4. 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, parents and players are encouraged not to abuse this rule and to attend practice on a regular basis and to communicate with a coach if a player is not going to attend a practice. If a coach feels that a player is abusing the league's mandatory play policy, a coach may petition the league, in writing, requesting that the rule be waived on a per player basis for one week. The league will not communicate between coaches, players, and parents on the request to waive the participation rule on a per player basis.
- 1.3.5. Referees will not enforce this. 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.
- 1.3.6. 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.
- 1.3.7. Due to the mandatory play policy, teams cannot exceed the number of players listed below.
  - 1.3.7.1. 5-6 Division – 12 Players
  - 1.3.7.2. 7-8 Division – 12 Players

- 1.3.7.3. 9-10 Division – 16 Players
- 1.3.7.4. 11-12 Division – 16 Players
- 1.3.7.5. 13-15 Division – 16 Players

#### 1.4. Ball Size

- 1.4.1. 5-6 Division – “Pee-Wee” sized ball or equivalent to a “Wilson K2” football.
- 1.4.2. 7-8 Division – “Pee-Wee” sized ball or equivalent to a “Wilson K2” football.
- 1.4.3. 9-10 Division – “Pee-Wee” sized ball or equivalent to a “Wilson K2” football.
- 1.4.4. 11-12 Division – “Junior” or “Pee-Wee” sized ball.
- 1.4.5. 13-15 Division – “Youth” sized ball.

1.5. Teams are not allowed more than three days of activity per week. This would mean a team is allowed two practices and one game per a seven-day period.

1.6. Practice sessions (date/time/location) are at the discretion of each head coach.

1.7. Each team can have up to 3 coaches on the sideline during a game.

## 2. Code of Conduct

2.1. Each player, parent and coach is required to sign a code of conduct form. Bad conduct will not be tolerated. If a player or a coach is ejected from a game, he or she will be restricted from participating the following week. If a player or coach is ejected a second time, they will not be permitted to return for the remainder of the season.

2.2. There is a 4 play “cool down” period a referee can use to allow a player to calm down and return to play.

2.3. Examples of bad conduct are:

- 2.3.1. Arguing with a referee or league official.
- 2.3.2. Foul language or any obscene gesture.
- 2.3.3. Trash talking (Trash talk is talk that may be offensive to officials, opposing players, teams or spectators), taunting and showboating.
- 2.3.4. Fighting
- 2.3.5. Tackling
- 2.3.6. Elbowing
- 2.3.7. Cheap shots
- 2.3.8. Intentional blocking
- 2.3.9. Clotheslining, kicking or intentionally grabbing a players shirt

2.4. If a parent or spectator becomes disruptive, enters the coaching area or enters the playing area, a referee, coach or league official will immediately speak with that individual. If that person refuses to cooperate, they will be asked to leave the field. If they further refuse, Prince William County Park Authority and Prince William County Police will be notified, and that

*person will be removed and forbidden to return to GHFYL permitted fields for the rest of the season.*

### **3. Game Play**

#### **3.1. General**

##### **3.1.1. Field Size**

- 3.1.1.1. 5-6 Division – 60X30 yards.*
- 3.1.1.2. 7-8 Division – 60X30 yards.*
- 3.1.1.3. 9-10 Division – Regulation football field.*
- 3.1.1.4. 11-12 Division – Regulation football field.*
- 3.1.1.5. 13-15 Division – Regulation football field.*

*3.1.2. One coach is permitted on the field at all times for the 5-6 and 7-8 Divisions. Coaches are not permitted on the field for the older divisions*

*3.1.3. First possession is determined by a coin toss.*

*3.1.4. Possession does NOT change after halftime. Play resumes exactly where it left off.*

*3.1.5. A team must field a full team of players at all times.*

*3.1.6. If a team cannot field the maximum number of players at game time, they may petition the opposing coach and league officials to play with no less than the number of players listed below. However, the opposing team may still play with a full team. If the opposing team refuses to play, the matter is dead and the team will forfeit the game.*

*3.1.6.1. 5-6 Division – 4 Players.*

*3.1.6.2. 7-8 Division – 4 Players.*

*3.1.6.3. 9-10 Division – 6 Players.*

*3.1.6.4. 11-12 Division – 6 Players.*

*3.1.6.5. 13-15 Division – 6 Players.*

*3.1.7. Each player must have a set of flags.*

*3.1.7.1. Flags should be simple pull flags that are made up of two flags.*

*3.1.7.2. Flags may not be black or the same color as the team's uniforms.*

*3.1.7.3. 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.*

*3.1.8. Players must tuck in their shirts so that the flags are visible.*

*3.1.9. Jerseys will be numbered, but due to equipment limitations, players may have the same jersey number as another player on the team. Each organization should try to avoid the occurrence as much as possible.*

*3.1.10. If a player is injured before the game:*

*3.1.10.1. The cut or abrasion must be covered with an appropriate dressing.*

*3.1.11. If a player has a cast, it must be covered with appropriate padding and has to be cleared by a referee for safe play. If a referee does not approve the padding, the player will not be allowed to participate.*

*3.1.12. 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.*

- 3.1.13. *If a player wears eyewear:*
  - 3.1.13.1. *Eyewear must be secured by a strap.*
  - 3.1.13.2. *No sunglasses are allowed unless they are for prescription purposes and then they must be secured by a strap.*
- 3.1.14. *Knee and elbow pads are allowed. However, a referee may inspect them at any time during the game and ask they be removed.*
- 3.1.15. *Gloves may be worn but must be regulation football type gloves, made of a soft, pliable and non-abrasive material.*
- 3.1.16. *Hats, headbands and wristbands are permitted so long as there is no message, except sports logos.*
- 3.1.17. *No jewelry of any type can be worn during the game.*

### 3.2. *Offense*

- 3.2.1. *The offense will take possession of the ball on the 5 yard line and has 3 downs to make a first down or score.*
- 3.2.2. *First Down Markers*
  - 3.2.2.1. *5-6 Division – (1) Midfield.*
  - 3.2.2.2. *7-8 Division – (1) Midfield.*
  - 3.2.2.3. *9-10 Division – (4) 20 and 40 yard lines.*
  - 3.2.2.4. *11-12 Division – (3) 25 yard lines and 50 yard line.*
  - 3.2.2.5. *13-15 Division – (3) 25 yard lines and 50 yard line.*
- 3.2.3. *After a team fails to make a first down, or score, using 3 downs, the opposing team will take possession and start their offensive series from the 5 yard line.*
- 3.2.4. *“No Run” zones are established to prevent power running the ball and for player safety. These zones are marked 5 yards prior to first down markers and end zones. “No Run” zones for the age divisions are listed below.*
  - 3.2.4.1. *5-6 Division – Rule not in effect. Running is permitted anywhere on the field.*
  - 3.2.4.2. *7-8 Division – 5 yards prior to first down markers and endzones.*
  - 3.2.4.3. *9-10 Division – 5 yards prior to first down markers and endzones.*
  - 3.2.4.4. *11-12 Division – 5 yards prior to first down markers and endzones.*
  - 3.2.4.5. *13-15 Division – 5 yards prior to first down markers and endzones.*
- 3.2.5. *The person with the ball may spin. Jumping or diving is not allowed and the ball will be spotted at the point where the ball carrier leaves their feet.*
- 3.2.6. *Flag guarding is prohibited.*
- 3.2.7. *If a ball is fumbled, it is dead.*
- 3.2.8. *There is no blocking, screening or intentional contact permitted. Once the ball crosses the line of scrimmage, either by running or after the receiver catches a pass, all other players must stop or move away from the play. No player may escort the ball carrier down the field of play if it interferes with any defender from making a play.*

- 3.2.9. *There is no kicking or punting permitted.*
- 3.2.10. *Only one player is allowed in motion at a time and they must move parallel or away from the line of scrimmage.*
- 3.2.11. *The center must center the ball in a regular style between his or her legs.*
- 3.2.12. *The quarterback is not allowed to run the ball unless the first get the ball to another player.*
- 3.2.13. *All players are eligible to catch a pass, including the quarterback once the ball is given to another player.*
- 3.2.14. *All passing does **NOT** need to be beyond the line of scrimmage. Screens and backwards passes are allowed.*
- 3.2.15. *Shovel passes are allowed.*
- 3.2.16. *Pitching is only permitted behind the line of scrimmage.*
- 3.2.17. *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.*
- 3.2.18. *Once the ball is handed off, the ball carrier is eligible to run or pass the ball.*
- 3.2.19. *The quarterback has a 7 second “pass clock” to pass the ball or hand it off. Once the ball is handed off, the 7 second rule does not apply.*
- 3.2.20. *Scoring*
  - 3.2.20.1. *Touchdown ~ 6 points*
  - 3.2.20.2. *Extra Point ~ from the 5 yard line is 1 point*
  - 3.2.20.3. *Extra Point ~ from the 12 yard line is 2 points*
  - 3.2.20.4. *Safety ~ 2 points and the ball changes possession*

### 3.3. Defense

- 3.3.1. *All players who rush the QB must start behind the “rush line”. Division rules for rushing the QB are listed below.*
  - 3.3.1.1. *5-6 Division – “Rush Line” is 5 yards behind the LoS. Only two (2) players may rush.*
  - 3.3.1.2. *7-8 Division – “Rush Line” is 5 yards behind the LoS. Only two (2) players may rush.*
  - 3.3.1.3. *9-10 Division – “Rush Line” is 7 yards behind the LoS. Any player may rush.*
  - 3.3.1.4. *11-12 Division – “Rush Line” is 7 yards behind the LoS. Any player may rush.*
  - 3.3.1.5. *13-15 Division – “Rush Line” is 7 yards behind the LoS. Any player may rush.*
- 3.3.2. *In the 5-6 division, a ball may not be stripped from the quarterback by a rusher. If the ball is stripped, the play will be blown dead. In all other divisions, a ball may be stripped from the quarterback by a rusher and advanced.*
- 3.3.3. *Players rushing the quarterback may not move past the “rush line” until the ball is snapped. If a player crosses the “rush line” prior to the snap and then cross the LoS*

*prior to a handoff, an illegal rush penalty will be called.*

*3.3.4. After the quarterback hands the ball off, all players are eligible to rush the runner.*

*3.3.5. Any player not rushing may defend the line of scrimmage, but may not cross the line until the ball is handed off.*

*3.3.6. "Jamming" is not allowed and will result in an unsportsmanlike penalty.*

*3.3.7. If a ball is intercepted, it can be returned and will be spotted where the flag is pulled.*

### **3.4. Game Timing**

#### **3.4.1. Game Length**

*3.4.1.1. 5-6 Division – Game length is 36 minutes. This consists of two 15 minute halves and a 6 minute half-time.*

*3.4.1.2. 7-8 Division – Game length is 36 minutes. This consists of two 15 minute halves and a 6 minute half-time.*

*3.4.1.3. 9-10 Division – Game length is 44 minutes. This consists of two 20 minute halves and a 4 minute half-time.*

*3.4.1.4. 11-12 Division – Game length is 44 minutes. This consists of two 20 minute halves and a 5 minute half-time.*

*3.4.1.5. 13-15 Division – Game length is 44 minutes. This consists of two 20 minute halves and a 5 minute half-time.*

*3.4.2. Games are played with a "running clock" the entire game.*

*3.4.3. Referees can stop the clock at their discretion.*

*3.4.4. Time out periods will be allowed as follows:*

##### **3.4.4.1. Regular Season**

*3.4.4.1.1. 3 ~ 30 second time outs per half*

*3.4.4.1.2. The game clock will stop during these periods.*

*3.4.4.1.3. Unused time outs do not carry over from the first half of play.*

##### **3.4.4.2. Playoffs**

*3.4.4.2.1. 1 ~ 60 second time out per half*

*3.4.4.2.2. 3 ~ 30 second time outs per half*

*3.4.4.2.3. The game clock will stop during these periods.*

*3.4.4.2.4. Unused time outs do not carry over from the first half of play.*

### **3.5. Overtime**

*3.5.1. If a game requires an overtime period, they play will proceed as follows:*

*3.5.2. Coin toss determines first overtime possession.*

*3.5.2.1. Play will start at the defending team's 20 yard line.*

*3.5.2.2. A team has 3 plays to score. After a team scores, they will have a try at extra points.*

*3.5.2.3. If both teams score, or neither team scores, the game goes into the next overtime*

*period.*

*3.5.2.4. If one team does not score during the period, the game is over.*

*3.5.2.5. If the game is still tied after 3 overtime periods, it will result in a tie, unless it is a tournament game, then the game will be played until there is a winner.*

### *3.6. One Sided Game Rule*

*3.6.1. If a team is losing by 25 points or more in the second half, the losing offense will start at mid field instead of the 5 yard line and the clock cannot be stopped by the winning team.*

*3.6.2. If a team is losing by 35 points or more in the first half, the losing offense will start at mid field instead of the 5 yard line and the clock cannot be stopped by the winning team.*

*3.6.3. If a team is losing by 35 points or more at any point in the game, the opposing team will not be allowed to rush the quarterback at all. The 7 second rule still applies.*

*3.6.4. If a team is losing by 25 points or more with 2 minutes or less in the game, the game will be called.*

### *3.7. Penalties*

#### *3.7.1. Defense*

*3.7.1.1. Offsides ~ 5 yards*

*3.7.1.2. Interference ~ 10 yards and automatic first down*

*3.7.1.3. Illegal Contact ~ (holding, blocking, etc.) 10 yards and automatic first down*

*3.7.1.4. Illegal Flag Pull ~ (before receiver has the ball) 10 yards and automatic first down*

*3.7.1.5. Illegal Rushing ~ (starting rush from inside 7 yard marker) 10 yards*

*3.7.1.6. Delay of Game ~ clock stops, 10 yards*

#### *3.7.2. Offense*

*3.7.2.1. Illegal Motion ~ (more than one person moving, false start, etc.) 5 yards*

*3.7.2.2. Offensive Pass Interference ~ (illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender) 10 yards from the line of scrimmage*

*3.7.2.3. Offensive Screening/Blocking ~ 10 yards from the line of scrimmage*

*3.7.2.4. Flag Guarding ~ 10 yards from the spot of the foul*

*3.7.2.5. Jumping or Diving ~ Play is dead at the spot of the foul*

*3.7.2.6. Delay of Game ~ 10 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down*

*3.7.2.7. Seven (7) second violation on QB – Play is dead at the spot, loss of down*

*3.7.3. Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.*



- 3.7.4. All penalties, except spot foul penalties, will be assessed from the line of scrimmage.*
- 3.7.5. Only the team captain may ask the referee questions about the rule clarification and interpretations.*
- 3.7.6. Players cannot questions judgment calls.*
- 3.7.7. Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.*