

# Greenwood Family YMCA

## Youth Flag Football Rules

### The Game: Basics

- A coin toss determines the first possession
- The clock will start when the ball is snapped.
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at their 10 yard line and has (4) plays to achieve a first down (10 yards).
- If the offensive team fails to gain 10 yards, possession of the ball goes to the opposing team, and they begin their drive from their 10 yard line (no punts).
- All possession changes, **except interceptions**, start on the offense's 10-yard line.
- Teams will play two 10 minute halves with a running clock for the first two weeks and four 10 minute periods with a running clock for the last three weeks. The clock only stops during time-outs, possession changes and during the last minute of each half. Officials will signal when the clock stops.
- The playing field is 50 yards in length, and 30 yards in width. (Dimensions do not include the two 10 yard end zones.)
- If a team is trailing by 24 points they will retain possession of the ball until the 24-point deficit is reduced.

### Players

- Teams must field a minimum of 6 players at all times.
- After a 5-minute grace period, the game will be forfeited if either team does not have at least 6 players to begin the game

### Playing Requirements (Time)

- As long as every player plays equal time (as equal as possible) and preferably as close to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the game as possible, coaches may substitute as they see fit on any dead ball.

### Timing/Overtime

- Games consist of two 10-minute halves for the first two weeks and four 10 minute periods for the last three week, both with a **running clock** (until the last minute of each half).
- If the score is tied at the end of regulation, teams will get the ball on the 15 yard line with 4 downs to score and no first downs. Game is over when one team does not score. PATs are included.
- Each time the ball is spotted by an official, the team has **30** seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay of game penalty is enforced.
- Each team has two full time-outs and two 30 second time-outs per game.
- Officials may stop the clock at their discretion.
- There will be no score kept or overtime played except in the older age group.

### Scoring

- Touchdown: 6 points
- Extra Point: 1 point (played from 5-yard line)
- Safety 2 points

### De-Flagging

- The player carrying or having possession of the ball is down when the flag is removed from the player's waist (de-flagging).
- The defensive player shall hold the flag above their head and stand still.

- The defensive players cannot hold or push the ball carrier to remove the flag. Accidental touching of the body or shoulder while reaching for the flag shall not be considered a violation; however, touching the head or face shall be considered a violation.

### **Dead Balls**

- The 5&6 year-old players are not required to snap the ball to begin the play. Quarterback starts play from behind the center with the ball in his/her hands. In all other age groups, the ball must be snapped between the legs, not off to one side, to start play. The 5&6 year olds coaches also have the option to start the play by saying, "Ready, set, hike!".
- Substitutions may be made on any dead ball; however, the 30-second rule is still in effect.
- Play is ruled dead when:
  - ball carrier's flag is pulled
  - ball carrier steps out of bounds
  - touchdown or safety is scored
  - ball carrier's knee hits the ground
  - ball carrier's flag falls out
  - the ball hits the ground

**Note: There are no fumbles**, the play is dead and ball is spotted where it hit the ground. Also, if the ball touches the ground in the end zone it will be considered a safety.

### **Running**

- The player who takes the handoff may only throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- Spinning is **not** allowed and players cannot leave their feet to avoid a defensive player (no diving).
- The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.
- The ball carrier cannot use their hands or arms to protect their flags.
- The ball carrier **CANNOT** lower his head to drive or run into a defensive player.
- Stiff-arming by the ball carrier is **not** allowed.
- Quarterback **CAN** run with the ball directly from the snap.
- Offense must avoid defensive players (they may not rush directly at the defense).
- "Fumble-Rooskie" or "Center Sneak" plays are **not** allowed.

### **Blocking/ Tackling**

- Offensive players may block defenders' path as long as no hands are used and no intentional contact is initiated (moving screens are allowed).
- Players must either grasp their jersey with both fists, elbows out or have arms crossed across the chest while blocking. Arms may not be extended.

### **Receiving**

- All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off or pitched behind the line of scrimmage).
- Only one player is allowed in motion at a time.
- Players must have at least one foot in bounds when making a catch.

### **Rushing the Quarterback**

- **All** defensive players must line up **at least 2 yards** off the line of scrimmage.
- If the ball is inside the 5, players must line up **at least 1 yard** off the line of scrimmage.
- **The defense is only allowed to move into the neutral zone or across the line of scrimmage once the ball is snapped**, not when the quarterback or coach says, "hike".

## Attire

- Cleats are allowed, except for metal spikes. Inspections will be made. All players **must** wear a protective mouthpiece. There are no exceptions. NOT PROVIDED

## Penalties

- Only the referees will call penalties.
- Only the team captain or head coach may ask the referee about rule clarifications and interpretations.
- Players or coaches cannot question judgment calls.
- Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.
- The referees are the final authority on the field. Except for in extreme cases, YMCA staff **will not** overrule calls made on the field.
- Questions about specific calls or rules should be addressed by head coach, referees, and YMCA staff before the game, during timeouts, at halftime, or at the conclusion of the game. All such discussions should be conducted away from players and parents.

## Defensive Penalties

- Offside 5-yards
- Pass Interference 10-yards and automatic first down
- Illegal Contact (holding, blocking, etc.) 10-yards and automatic first down.
- Illegal flag pull (before a player has the ball) 10-yards and automatic first down
- Lining up in the neutral zone (within 2 yards of the line of scrimmage) 5-yards
- Rushing over the center 5-yards

## Offensive Penalties

- Offside 5-yards
- Illegal motion 5-yards
- Illegal forward pass 5-Yards and loss of down
- Pass Interference 10-yards and loss of down
- Flag Guarding, spinning, diving, stiff arming 10-yards and loss of down
- Delay of game 5-yards
- Holding or illegal block 5-yards

## Interceptions

- Interceptions in the end zone may not be returned. The ball will be brought out to the 10-yard line. All other interceptions may be returned.

## Sportsmanship

**Flagrant Fouls:** Butting, Elbowing, Knee Blocking, Blocking from Behind, Knocking a player off his/her feet, Insulting or Abusive Language, Fighting, Taunting, and Unsportsmanlike Conduct.

FIRST OFFENSE- Player is removed from the game for 4 downs.

SECOND OFFENSE- Players may be removed from the game and not allowed to return.

**Officials may decide that severe infractions of the above rule may call for the second offense penalties on the first offense.**

- Prior to games, officials, players, and coaches will be lead in prayer by the home team.
- The home team is responsible for providing the chain crew.
- The visiting team is responsible for providing the game ball.

*Spectators, Players & Coaches who display a philosophy inconsistent with the Greenwood Family YMCA's philosophy will be asked to leave the premises.*