



FLAG FOOTBALL

The following rules shall govern the CYO Flag Football program.

1. **ELIGIBILITY:** All boys entering 2nd Grade through 5th Grade and all girls in 2nd Grade through 8th Grade are eligible for participation.
2. **LEAGUE FORMATION:** Leagues will be formed by CYO office based upon teams registered for play. Leagues may be formed by single grade or by combining grades in both grade school. Only children in at least 4th grade may play “up” on 5th grade teams. To be determined prior to the season.
3. **FIELD SIZE:** Games shall be played on fields deemed appropriate and scheduled by CYO. Standard field size shall be 50 yards in length by 40 yards in width, with some fields varying based on age and existing dimensions. End zones shall be at least 8 yards in length on either side. The following additional rules apply to the field of play:
 - a. The area marked 5 yards out from each end zone shall be considered the “No Running Zone” and no running plays shall be executed by either team within this zone.
 - b. There shall be two lines marked at 18 yards out from each end zone (or adjusted for scale of field) that shall be considered “First Down” lines. See rules for completing first down.
4. **UNIFORMS:** The official uniform for teams shall be provided by the team’s sponsoring parish. It shall consist of shorts/pants and a t-shirt or jersey top; flag football uniforms must meet all other CYO uniform guidelines regarding design and modesty. Shirts must be tucked into shorts/pants at all times during competition.
 - a. Flags shall be provided by the **parish programs** for all contests. Players must wear flags as instructed, with belt properly fastened and flags clearly visible over child’s uniform.
 - b. All players from the same team must wear the same single-colored flags/flag belts and need to contrast to the uniform shorts. All uniform shorts from the same team must be the same single solid color.
 - c. **OFFICIAL BALL** used for all CYO Flag Football games will be provided by CYO. All grades will use the Pee Wee size ball.
 - d. Shoes are required for participation. Cleats are allowed and must meet standard CYO requirements. Only football shoes with molded non-removable cleats or screw-in male plastic cleats without metal ends will be allowed. To be legal, cleats must not exceed ½

inch in length and must be made of rubber type synthetic materials that are not abrasive and do not develop a deep, cutting edge.

- e. Players must remove all jewelry, including watches, earrings, or anything else deemed hazardous by CYO Officials or Administration. Soft braces are allowed provided child has been cleared to participate with brace by a physician. Sleeves and tights must be white, black, beige or the predominant color of the player's uniform. Headbands, armbands and wristbands may also be worn provided they are white, black, beige or the predominant color of the player's uniform. If multiple players on the same team are wearing accessories, they must all be the same color. Tape is allowed on the arm, fingers or ankles. Players may wear gloves and/or (soft) knee or elbow pads.
 - f. Mouth guards are highly recommended for each player participating. These must be appropriate size and fit. Mouth guards must be plain; colors are allowed but there may be no logo, image or writing visible on the mouth guard at any time.
 - g. Numbers are only required on the back of the jersey but can be present on the front and the back of the jersey if desired.
- 5. An adult supervisor shall be appointed by CYO and be present at each facility during games. The supervisor shall be the sole representative of the CYO Office and shall have final say in all decisions or disagreements before, during or after competition.
 - 6. The head coach and a player from each team shall meet at midfield prior to each game for the coin toss. The team listed on the schedule as "visiting team" shall call the toss prior to the coin flip. Team winning the toss will receive the ball first with opposing team receiving ball first after halftime. Officials may address any special facility rules or appropriate game notifications at this time.
 - 7. Each team shall have seven (7) players on the field of play at one time Teams may begin play with no less than **five (5)** players. The scheduled start time is forfeit time.
 - 8. The game shall be played using the following rules and guidelines:
 - a. Teams shall start each possession at their offense's own 5-yard line, with the exception being that following interceptions teams shall take over at the spot where the player was ruled down. A player who intercepts the ball shall be allowed to return the interception and he shall be considered live until his flag is pulled, he scores a touchdown, or he is otherwise ruled down by the official.
 - b. Play will begin with the "center" snapping the ball to the "quarterback". The offensive team must have at least one player on the line of scrimmage at the snap on each play, with up to four players allowed on the line of scrimmage. The center must snap the ball through his legs and the ball must completely leave his hands (EXCEPTION: In Girls Flag, the ball can be snapped from the side).
 - c. Teams on offense shall have three downs to reach a first down marker or score a touchdown. First down markers shall be placed at approximately 18 yards out from each end zone, so that a team beginning on its own 5-yard line may get two first downs before scoring a touchdown. When a team reaches or passes the first down marker their downs

shall “reset”, and they shall have three more downs to reach the other first down marker or the end zone.

- d. There shall be no punting or kicking in the game. Teams not reaching a first down marker in three attempts shall turn the ball over to the other team, who shall begin possession from their own 5-yard line.
- e. The ball is considered a live ball when snapped and remains so until the ball carrier’s flag has been pulled or the ball hits the ground and the official whistles the ball dead. A player who catches the ball in the air is considered in-bounds if one foot touches in the field of play prior to the remainder of his body landing.
- f. There are no fumbles in the game. All “fumbles” shall be considered a dead-ball where the ball hit the ground and the offensive team shall retain possession. A fumble does not result in a turnover to the other team. A dropped exchange from the center to the quarterback (either direct snap or in shotgun) shall be considered a fumble.
- g. Any ball carrier whose flags fall off during the play, even accidental without a defensive play on the flags, shall be considered down at that spot.
- h. Each touchdown is worth six points. The team shall then have one attempt from the 5-yard line to reach the end zone worth another two points. The “No Running Zone” is not in affect during the two-point conversion attempt and teams may pass or run. Regardless of the play’s success, the opposing team shall start with ball at its own offensive 5 yard line following the two point conversion. An interception off a two point conversion may not be returned, and the play will be considered dead upon the defensive player taking possession.
- i. A touchdown, two-point conversion, and safety shall be the only scoring plays in the game. A safety is called when an offensive player is called down in his own end zone.
- j. All players on the field shall be considered eligible to throw, run or catch the ball on each play.
- k. Substitutions may be allowed on any dead ball.
- l. Blocking or screening of any kind is not allowed. An offensive player may not impede a defensive player’s path to the ball carrier, including when the defensive player is rushing the passer from a legal rushing position. Once the ball carrier crosses the line of scrimmage or receives a pass, all other offensive players should cease moving to avoid penalty.
- m. The quarterback may not run directly with the ball from the snap. He may handoff or lateral/pitch the ball to another player, as well as scramble behind the line of scrimmage, but cannot run directly. A player who takes a handoff or lateral behind the line of scrimmage may throw the ball. No handoffs or laterals are allowed once the ball carrier passes the line of scrimmage.
- n. One defensive player may rush the passer provided he begins the play at least 7 yards from the line of scrimmage on the defensive side of the ball. Any player beginning the play within 7 yards is not eligible to rush the passer. Once the quarterback has completed a handoff or lateral/pitch, all defensive players are eligible to cross the line of scrimmage. A player crossing the line of scrimmage may attempt to block a pass by jumping but may not come into contact with the passer at any time (results in Roughing the Passer penalty). A ball batted down will be considered a dead ball at that spot and remain with the offensive

team provided it is not fourth down, regardless of whether it is a forward pass or pitch/lateral.

- o. Flag Guarding is considered an attempt by the ball carrier to impede the defensive players' attempt to pull his flag. A ball carrier may not impede the defensive players' attempt to pull his flag at any time through the use of hands, uniform or any other method of "guarding" the flags. However, the offensive player may spin and/or move laterally from left to right to avoid the flag pull, provided that they do not guard the flag in any other way. An offensive player may only leave his feet if it is clearly an attempt to avoid a collision without receiving a penalty, though he will be declared down at that spot.
 - p. Only one player is allowed "in-motion" at a time and all motion must be lateral to the line of scrimmage and not moving toward the line of scrimmage.
 - q. Defenders may not tackle, hold, or dive at the ball carrier in anyway while trying to grab a flag.
- 9. Clock - Games are played with a 44-minute running clock and shall be split into two 22-minute halves. Halftime is 6-minutes. The official game clock shall be kept by the official(s). The clock shall only stop for timeouts, though the official(s) may stop the clock at any time at their discretion, including for injuries.
 - a. Each team shall have one 1-minute timeout per half, for a total of two timeouts per game. Timeouts do not carry over to the second half if not used in the first half.
 - b. If the game ends in a tie, no overtime period shall be played .
 - c. Each team shall have 30 seconds from the end of the previous play to run a new play. Time shall be kept by the official and failure to run play shall result in "delay of game" penalty.
- 10. When a team is winning by 35 points or more in the second half, the trailing team is provided one more opportunity to score in order to continue regulation play. If the team does not succeed in scoring, the game is considered over at that point and scoring stopped at that time. However, if more than 10 minutes remains in regulation time at the point in which the game is stopped, the trailing team may have up to two consecutive offensive possessions as time allows in order to attempt to score. Each possession will last until the team scores, fails to reach a first down, or turns over the ball. Points are not counted toward the final score. The game shall end regardless of when full time has been reached.
- 11. Penalties and Yardage. Officials shall be the only individuals who may call penalties during the game. Their ruling is considered final and may not be argued or reviewed. Coaches arguing penalties may be given an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty. **The opposing coach may choose to decline the penalty of the team penalized.**
 - a. False Start results in a loss of five yards from the line of scrimmage.
 - b. Defensive Offside shall be called when any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage at any time prior to the snap of the ball. The play shall be whistled dead at the time of the penalty and the penalty shall be five yards forward from the line of scrimmage.
 - c. Offensive Pass Interference results in a loss of five yards from the line of scrimmage and a loss of down.

- d. Defensive Pass Interference results in the ball being placed at the spot of the foul and an automatic first down being given to the offensive team.
 - e. Illegal Motion is called when more than one person is moving prior to the snap on the offensive side of the ball. Results in a loss of five yards.
 - f. Illegal Blocking shall be called on any offensive player impeding a defensive player's attempt at the ball carrier, either while rushing or pursuing a player beyond the line of scrimmage. The result shall be a loss of five yards and loss of down.
 - g. Flag guarding shall result in a loss of five yards from the spot of the foul and a loss of down.
 - h. Unsportsmanlike Conduct shall be called in the event of any unnecessary roughness or inappropriate behavior on behalf of players, coaches or fans. Any penalty called on coaches or fans shall be assessed to the team they represent. The penalty shall be a loss of ten yards from the spot of the foul and a loss of down. Two unsportsmanlike conduct penalties on any individual will result in ejection from the contest and an automatic suspension from the next two (2) games. (see General Rules of Competition).
 - i. An Illegal Rush shall be called on any player who rushes from a starting point within 7 yards of the line of scrimmage. The penalty moves the offensive team five yards forward from the line of scrimmage.
 - j. Holding shall be called on any defensive player who holds an offensive player. The penalty shall be five yards from the end of the play and an automatic first down.
 - k. Roughing the Passer shall be called if contact is made with the quarterback in any way by the defensive player other than in pulling the quarterback's flag while he has the ball. The penalty shall be ten yards from the end of the play and an automatic first down.
 - l. An Illegal Flag Pull shall be called on any defensive player who pulls a player's flags before he receives the ball either through a pass or running play. This shall also be called on any defensive player who dives at the ball carrier in attempt to grab flags. Only the ball carrier may have his flags pulled during a play. An illegal flag pull results in a 10-yard penalty and automatic first down for the offensive team.
 - m. In the event the defensive player did not make a play on the flags of an offensive player, yet the flags fall off, an official may deem an illegal flag pull "inadvertent" at his discretion and may choose not to assess a penalty. Any receiver or ball carrier whose flags fall off "inadvertently" will be considered down at that spot. A receiver may catch the ball after his flags have fallen off but will be considered down immediately following the catch.
 - n. Delay of Game results in a loss of five yards from the line of scrimmage.
12. During Flag Football games, one coach from each team will be allowed on the field during play. This coach may instruct the participants on his or her team but may not interfere with play.
13. ARTICLE VI (SECTION 4): Any player, manager, coach or spectator who is ejected from any contest sponsored by the CYO for any reason other than stated in Section 3, shall be suspended for two (2) games.

14. **MANDATORY EQUAL PLAYING TIME – 2nd through 4th Grade:** It is the responsibility of the coach to ensure that all players present in uniform endeavor for equal playing time. All players must participate in an equal number of series or possessions to the greatest extent possible. In the event that equal distribution is not mathematically possible, no player shall receive more than one additional series or possession than any other player. A member of the coaching staff must notify the opposing coach and field supervisor prior to the start of the contest of any players unable to participate due to injury or disciplinary reason. Playing time is managed by the parents and the coaches of a team. Opposing coaches have no oversight of opposing team's game management.
15. **MINIMUM TOUCHES – 2nd through 4th Grade:** Coaches for each player present in uniform must strive for everyone to get a touch in the game. A touch is defined as any live play in which the player receives a direct snap, handoff, lateral, or forward pass from a teammate during a possession. It is the responsibility of the coaching staff to ensure compliance with this rule. A member of the coaching staff must notify the opposing coach and field supervisor prior to the start of the contest of any players unable to participate due to injury or disciplinary reason.