

# Maquoketa Area Family YMCA



## Flag Football Rules Manual



YMCA

We build strong kids,  
strong families, strong communities.

# FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

Coaches and players should become familiar with these rules.

## 1. Field

- 1.1. 40y x 60y ( 2 10y end zones) for grades 3<sup>rd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup>
  - 1.1.1. 30y x 60y (2 10y end zones) for grades 1<sup>st</sup> through 2<sup>nd</sup>

## 2. Uniform

- 2.1. Gym Shoes, all-purpose turf shoes, molded cleats are permitted.
  - 2.1.1. \*\*\*Metal spiked shoes are prohibited.\*\*\*
- 2.2. A belt with three flags must be worn—furnished by the Y. Knots in flags are not permitted. Flags may not be wrapped around any garment or article of clothing. Jerseys must be tucked in so that no part of the flag is covered or interfered with when pulled. Both offensive and defensive players must wear flags. Mouth guards should be worn at all times. Wear it for every clinic day, practice, & game!!!!

### 2.3. A Pee-Wee sized football is used.

## 3. Players

- 3.1. Teams will play 8 vs. 8 or an equal amount if a team is short players. This league is for boys and girls in grades 1<sup>st</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup>.
- 3.2. Teams will be formed by grades and/or towns (or as close as possible if possible).
- 3.3. Teams are composed of a minimum of 9 and a maximum of 12 players. 8 players play at a time (unless teams are short).
- 3.4. Practice will be determined by your designated coaches. Coaches will have to call in or come into the Y to reserve a time and location for practice.
- 3.5. Games are played in October on Saturday mornings.
- 3.6. Substitution is permitted during stoppage of play.
- 3.7. There will be 5 players on the line of scrimmage at all times when the ball is snapped. The Quarterback may be in shotgun formation or directly behind the center.
- 3.8. Every boy and girl must play at least ½ of every game – 20 minutes.
- 3.9. It is suggested that each coach rotate all players throughout the season.

## 4. Scoring

- 4.1. Touchdown: 6 points
- 4.2. Point after touchdown (PAT): 1 point
- 4.3. Safety: 2 points. When you down opponents behind their own goal line. The team who was tackled in their end zone will punt from their 5 yard line.
- 4.4. A team can not score on a fumble or interception during an extra point attempt

## 5. Start

- 5.1. Coin is tossed; winner gets choice of direction or to receive kick. At half time, direction of goals and opposite team will receive the ball to start the 2<sup>nd</sup> half.
- 5.2. The team who starts play will start at their 5 yard line.

## 6. Game Length

- 6.1. A game shall consist of four 10 minute quarters with a three-minute rest period between halves.

- 6.2. The clock will run straight through play except for time outs or injury. The clock will not stop for incomplete passes, out of bounds, a score, or enforcing a penalty.
- 6.3. Two time-outs of 30-second duration are allowed per team per game.

## 7. Yards & Downs

- 7.1. The field will be marked with three “First down lines” that are located at the 10 yard lines and down the middle of the field. So, the team that starts at the 5 yard line can achieve its first first down by only gaining 5 yards. The other 2 first downs are achieved by advancing 10 yards.
- 7.2. Four downs are permitted in which a team must advance the ball to the first down line or to the endzone for a score.

## 8. Advancing the Ball

- 8.1. Kicking, Running, Passing, or Penalty.
- 8.2. 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teams shall have 45 seconds between downs to put the ball in play. 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade teams are allowed 30 seconds. Allow 10 seconds extra for substitutions. Coaches shall not stall their team to run the clock down.
- 8.3. The ball is put in play by a center snap between the center’s legs. The quarterback (QB) must clearly have possession of the ball before the ball can be advanced. **NO CENTER SNEAKS!!**
- 8.4. Cadence will be called as taught: down, ready, set, then on any number called in the huddle. \*\*\* Defense cannot yell in anyway that disrupts the QB’s cadence.\*\*\*
- 8.5. If motion plays are used, there can be only 1 player in motion at one time. All other players must remain set until the ball is hiked.
- 8.6. The ball carrier may not deliberately run over a defensive man. The player must try to run around the defender. Player is down at point of infraction. Based on officials judgment.
- 8.7. Stiff arming is illegal. Slapping or pushing at the arm or hand of an opponent during his attempt to take the flag is interpreted as stiff-arming or flag guarding. Player is down at point of infraction and this is also based on the official’s judgment.
- 8.8. If a player’s knee at any point touches the ground, the player is called down and the play is dead.
- 8.9. Every player is eligible to receive a pass.

## 9. Downing Ball Carrier

- 9.1. Pulling one or both flags from the ball carriers hips or back.
- 9.2. A ball carrier may not continue to advance the ball if player has slipped and fallen, even though both of the flags are still secured to the belt. Ball is downed where player fell.
- 9.3. If a player catches or intercepts a pass, or in any legal manner receives the ball and player does not have both flags showing in a legal manner, player shall be considered down at the spot the ball was received.
- 9.4. Any player who loses their flag while advancing with the ball shall be downed at the point at which the flag had been lost. A player who receives the ball (either by handoff or catching a pass) without their flags shall also be considered down at the spot. This would include the allowance of a touchdown—ie. receiving a pass in the end zone without one or both flags on.
- 9.5. Players must go for the flag.
- 9.6. A defensive player may not hold, push, or knock the ball carrier down in an attempt to remove the flag.

## **10. Blocking**

- 10.1. Blocking is limited to shoulder blocks above the waist. At least one of the blockers feet must be on the ground when contact is made. "Flying" blocks are not permitted.
- 10.2. Blockers may use open hands in a pushing motion but cannot grab any clothing at anytime (holding). Blockers cannot touch defensive player above shoulders.
- 10.3. The use of hands by a defensive player is restricted to the body and shoulders of the offensive blocker and not a slapping or hitting manner. Can't slap head.
- 10.4. A defensive player may not tackle, block, or push a ball carrier in any manner to down him. Unintentional bumping may occur. This involves referee judgment on the play.
- 10.5. No offensive blocks to the defenders backside (clipping).

## **11. Defense**

- 11.1. There will be 3 defensive lineman and 5 defensive backs and/or linebackers.
- 11.2. The defensive tackle (DT) must play directly head on with the offensive center. The defensive ends (DE) may play on the outside shoulder of the offensive ends. The (DE) must play down in a three or four-point stance.
  - 11.2.1. Note: The defensive lineman must play at least 1 yard off of the line of scrimmage. All defensive backs must line up at least 2 yards off the line of scrimmage.
- 11.3. Blitzing and defensive shifting is allowed. Blitzing can only be done once per set of 4 downs and blitzing **CANNOT** be done by the 3 defensive linemen. Blitzing must be done by the other 5 defensive players. A first down by the offense results in a new chance for the defense to blitz. Blitzes, however, cannot be carried over from one set of downs to the next.
- 11.4. The defense may still go after the QB or RB in the backfield w/o blitzing. The defense may go after the QB after a 3 second count which is done by the official. The defense may also charge into the backfield without using a blitz whenever the ball is handed off or pitched to an offensive player from the QB or when the QB leaves the pocket.
- 11.5. No specific stance is required on punt plays for both offensive and defensive linemen.

## **12. Forward Ball**

- 12.1. Only one forward pass may be thrown on each down (must be behind the line of scrimmage), but any number of laterals or backward passes are allowed.
- 12.2. All players are eligible to receive the pass.
- 12.3. A forward pass may be thrown from any point behind the line of scrimmage.

## **13. Fumbles**

- 13.1. Any player may run with a fumbled ball provided that he catches it before the ball touches the ground. This is the only way that a fumble can cause a change of possession. Any fumbled ball touching the ground is ruled a dead ball at the spot it first touches the ground. If the ball is fumbled forward the ball will be downed from where the fumble occurred. With any other fumble, the ball is ruled dead from where the ball first touches the ground.
- 13.2. A punted ball, which touches the ground without being first touched by kicking team player, can be picked up and run by any member of the receiving team. A punted ball that makes contact by the receiving team but not caught is considered fumbled by the receiving team and can be picked up by the kicking team. The spot where the kicking team picks the ball up from, after it is touched by the receiving team, is where the kicking team will take over possession from. No advancing is allowed.

## 14. Sideline Play

- 14.1. The ball shall be brought in towards the center of the field and put into play at that spot after every play.

## 15. Punting

- 15.1. When a team intends to punt, they must designate by calling "Punt" before they get to the line of scrimmage. This must be done loud enough to be heard by the opposing team. The receiving team must have time to setup to receive the punt.
- 15.2. The receiving team must have at least four players within 5 yards of the line of scrimmage before the ball is punted.
- 15.3. No member of either team may cross the line of scrimmage until the ball has been kicked. The football will not be snapped to the punter. The punter must kick the ball from at least 5 yards behind the line of scrimmage.
- 15.4. The punt may not be blocked. Fake punts are not allowed.

## 16. Miscellaneous

- 16.1. A tie game shall end as a tie. There will be no tie-breaker.
- 16.2. An inadvertent whistle is when an official blows his whistle when the play should still be live.
  - 16.2.1. **Ruling:** Either take the ball where the whistle was blown (down counts), or replay from original line of scrimmage (down over). Offense gets choice.
- 16.3. Huddles will be mandatory during every down except during the last minute of either half. During these mandatory huddles, a coach is allowed, but not required, to be in the huddle with the team. Only 1 coach may be in the huddle at one time.

## 17. Penalties

- 17.1. 5 Yards Penalties
  - 17.1.1. Multiple players in motion
  - 17.1.2. Unnecessary roughness
  - 17.1.3. Unsportsmanlike conduct
  - 17.1.4. Profane language (also suspension for 5 minutes)
  - 17.1.5. Stiff arming
  - 17.1.6. Interference with catching punt
  - 17.1.7. Pulling flag(s) before receiver catches pass or punt
  - 17.1.8. Delay of game (repeat of down included)
  - 17.1.9. Off sides (repeat of down included; see rule 18)
  - 17.1.10. Offensive holding (repeat down included)
  - 17.1.11. There may be occasions when you will only step off penalties half the distance to the goal.
- 17.2. Pass interference – this will be assessed as a 10 yard penalty and will result in an automatic first down if by defense. Loss of down and 5 yards from line of scrimmage if on offense. Defensive interference in end zone results in first down on the 3-yard line if play started within the opposing team's 10 yard line.
- 17.3. There are no 15-yard penalties.
- 17.4. The end of the half or the end of the game cannot end on a defensive penalty.

## **18. Penalty Clarification**

- 18.1. If a player lines up off sides, do not call a penalty. Tell player to back up to the line of scrimmage before the snap. Off sides will be called if player leaves scrimmage line clearly before snap. We will attempt to raise awareness to the defensive line about this 1 yard cushion.
- 18.2. No illegal motion penalties will be called, e.g. not being set for one second. Coaches should not take advantage of this privilege.