



*Our **CYS NFL Flag Football Program** is a true recreational league for any player whether a beginner or a more talented player. Our guidance is for our players to **learn the basics** of the game and to have **FUN!!** These rules are designed to allow all participants equal opportunity to have fun in modified forms of flag football which match the capabilities of the youth.*

**COACHES:** Some rule changes have been established for better clarification.

1. Parents and coaches are **expected to render positive support** to all youth in the program, as well as to other coaches, officials, staff, and program volunteers. Your coaches will be giving you a Parents Code of Ethics that will need to be signed in order for your children to participate.
2. **Coach's & Parents** are also Teachers and role model good sportsmanship to our children. Please review your signed code of ethics.

- **Do NOT argue with the Officials, Sports Director, or Staff on Duty.** Questions, concerns, and suggestions can & will be handled later away from the children.
- You may be asked to leave if disrespectful or unruly.
- **Remember, that children are watching and that you are a "Role-Model"!**
- The referee's decision is **final and not to be questioned.** **Parents are not authorized to approach an official before or after the game.** Please see your coach if you have any questions regarding officials and their calls. You may **write up your concern & email it to the Sports Director for follow-up.** The email address can be found at the bottom of these rules.
- **Unruly, unsportsmanlike behavior** will **NOT** be tolerated and you "may" be asked to leave.
- **If a parent receives Ejection**, then **ONLY the Parent**, not the coach will be asked to leave the vicinity. You have 1 minute to leave, or a team forfeit will result. We do not want to punish the team or coach for inappropriate adult behavior. Please avoid this by remembering that this is a recreational league and that **no profanity or inappropriate behavior will be tolerated.**
- **Should an official eject a coach, parent, or player**, the CYS Staff will be responsible for ensuring the person is escorted off the field. Officials should only eject or disqualify players and or coaches. If a parent or spectator is **exhibiting inappropriate behavior**, the officials should request CYS personnel to handle them and NOT start game back until situation dealt with. **Officials should stay in the middle of the field until the situation is resolved.**
- The official should return to the center of the field and remain a neutral party until the removal is completed.
- We play in a "Recreation" league so please emphasis safety, sportsmanship, team play, and good attitudes.
- Please help us to **provide a safe, positive, and fun environment** for our youth.

#### **I. Game Rules**

1. Pre-game - all players will be inspected by the officials for proper uniform wear; shirts tucked-in with flags down and away on hips. **Mouth guards are recommended, not required. NO POCKETS. Player will be sent to the CYS gator for pockets to be taped down.**
2. At the start of each game, captains from both teams meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who starts with the ball. The visiting team calls the toss.
3. The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense. The loser of the coin toss has the choice of direction. Possession changes to start the second half to the team that started the game on defense.
4. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has three (3) plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three (3) plays to score a touchdown.
5. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts its drive on its own 5-yard line.
6. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its own 5-yard line.
7. All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yard line. Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.

## II. Terminology

<b>Boundary Lines</b>	The outer perimeter lines around the field. They include the sidelines and back of the end zone lines.
<b>Line of Scrimmage</b>	(LOS) an imaginary line running through the point of the football and across the width of the field.
<b>Line-to-Gain</b>	The line the offense must pass to get a first down or score.
<b>Rush Line</b>	An imaginary line running across the width of the field seven yards (into the defensive side) from the line of scrimmage.
<b>Offense</b>	The team with possession of the ball.
<b>Defense</b>	The team opposing the offense to prevent it from advancing the ball.
<b>Passer</b>	The offensive player that throws the ball and may or may not be the quarterback.
<b>Rusher</b>	The defensive player assigned to rush the quarterback to prevent him/her from passing the ball by pulling his/her flags or by blocking the pass.
<b>Downs (1-2-3)</b>	The offensive team has three attempts or "downs" to advance the ball. It must cross the line to gain to get another set of downs or to score.
<b>Live Ball</b>	Refers to the period of time that the play is in action. Generally used in regard to penalties. Live ball penalties are considered part of the play and must be enforced before the down is considered complete.
<b>Dead Ball</b>	Refers to the period of time immediately before or after a play.
<b>Whistle</b>	Sound made by an official using a whistle that signifies the end of the play or a stop in the action for a timeout, halftime or the end of the game.
<b>Inadvertent Whistle</b>	Official's whistle that is performed in error.
<b>Charging</b>	An illegal movement of the ball-carrier directly at a defensive player who has established position on the field. This includes lowering the head or initiating contact with a shoulder, forearm or the chest.
<b>Flag Guarding</b>	An illegal act by the ball-carrier to prevent a defender from pulling the ball-carrier's flags by stiff arm, lowering elbow or head or by blocking access to the runner's flags with a hand or arm.
<b>Shovel Pass</b>	A legal pitch attempted beyond the line of scrimmage.
<b>Lateral</b>	A backward or sideway toss of the ball by the ball-carrier.
<b>Unsportsmanlike Conduct</b>	A rude, confrontational or offensive behavior or language.

## III. Uniforms & Equipment

8. The CYS Sports league provides each player with an official flag belt and NFL FLAG team jersey. Teams will use footballs provided by CYS Sports.
9. Players must wear shoes that are safe and secure to play in. Cleats are preferred. However, cleats with exposed metal are never allowed and must be removed.
10. Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads and knee pads. Braces with exposed metals are not allowed.
11. Players must remove all jewelry, hats and do-rags. Winter beanies are allowed.
12. Players' jerseys must be tucked into shorts or pants if they hang below the belt line.
13. We recommend players wear shorts or pants that do not have pockets. **Flag belts cannot be the same color as shorts or pants.**

#### IV. FIELDS

14. The field dimensions are 30 yards by 70 yards with two 10-yard end zones, and a midfield line-to-gain. No-run zones precede each line-to-gain by 5 yards.
15. No-run zones are in place to prevent teams from conducting power run plays. While in the no-run zones (a 5-yard imaginary zone before midfield and before the end zone), teams cannot run the ball in any fashion. All plays must be pass plays, even with a handoff for teams ages 7 and above.
16. Stepping on the boundary line is considered out of bounds.

#### V. TEAM PLAY

17. Home teams wear dark color jerseys. Visiting teams wear light color jerseys.
18. Teams must consist of at least five players with a maximum of 10 players.
19. Teams must start games with a minimum of five players. In the event of an injury, a team with insufficient substitute players may play with four players on the field but no fewer than four. **In CYS Sports, we may ask the other team if they can "loan" a player so that all children can play. NO FORFIETS.**

#### VII. Timing & Overtime

20. Games are played on a 40-minute continuous clock with two 20-minute halves. Clock stops only for timeouts or injuries.
21. Halftime is **five minutes. (This time may need to be adjusted with the official according to game day circumstances.)**
22. 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.
23. Each team has one-30-second timeout per half.
24. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
25. In the event of an injury, the clock will stop then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play.
26. If the score is tied at the end of 40 minutes, the score will remain. **No overtime play will take place.**

#### VIII. Live Ball/Dead Balls

27. The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.
28. The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage.
  - a. It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on defense or offense enters the neutral zone.
  - b. Regarding the neutral zone, the official may give both teams a "courtesy" neutral zone notification to allow their players to move back behind the line of scrimmage.
29. A player who gains possession in the air is considered inbounds as long as one foot comes down in the field of play.
30. The defense may not mimic the offensive team signals by trying to confuse the offensive players, while the quarterback is calling out signals to start the play. This will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.
31. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
32. Any official can whistle the play dead.
33. Play is ruled "dead" when the ball hits the ground. If the ball hits the ground as a result of a bad snap, the ball is then placed where:
  - a. The ball-carrier's flag is pulled.
  - b. The ball-carrier steps out of bounds.
  - c. A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored.
  - d. The ball-carrier's knee or arm hits the ground.
  - e. The ball-carrier's flag falls out.
  - f. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one or no flag(s).
  - g. The 7 second pass clock expires.
  - h. Inadvertent whistle.

**NOTE: There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball-carrier's feet were at the time of the fumble.**

34. In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has two options:
  - a. Take the ball where it was when the whistle blew, and the down is consumed.
  - b. Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.
35. A team is allowed to use a timeout **to ask** an official's rule interpretation, not to give judgement **remarks on the call itself**. If the official's ruling is correct, the team will be charged a timeout. If the rule is interpreted incorrectly, the timeout will not be charged and the proper ruling will be enforced. Officials should all agree upon any controversial call - in order to give each team, the full benefit of each call.

## XI. Running

36. The ball is spotted where the runner's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball-carrier has the ball. Forward progress will be measured by the player's front foot. The ball will be spotted wherever the ball was located at the time of the flag pull or wherever the ball carrier left the field-of-play.
37. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball. The quarterback is the offensive player who receives the snap. Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Handoffs may be in front, behind or to the side of the offensive player but must be behind the line of scrimmage. The offense may use multiple handoffs.
38. A **"Center sneak" play is no longer allowed. The QB is not allowed to handoff to the center on the first handoff of the play.**
39. One lateral behind the line of scrimmage.
40. No-run Zones are located 5 yards before each end zone and 5 yards on either side of midfield are designed to avoid short-yardage power-running situations. Teams are not allowed to run in these zones if the subsequent line is LIVE. (Reminder: Each offensive team approaches only TWO no-run zones in each drive - one 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down and one 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD). Any player who receives a handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
41. Once the ball has been handed off in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
42. Ball carriers can leave their feet, jump, and spin if they don't put other players' safety at risk. **Players spinning out of control will be called for flag guarding.**
43. Ball carriers may not dive or hurdle to advance the ball.
44. No blocking or "screening" is allowed at any time.
45. Offensive players without the ball must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. No running with the ball-carrier.
46. Flag obstruction - All jerseys **MUST** be tucked in before play begins. The flags must be on the player's hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.

## XII. Passing

47. All passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage.
  - a. All passes that do not cross the line of scrimmage, whether received or not, are illegal forward passes.
  - b. The quarterback may throw the ball away to avoid a sack. Pass must go beyond the line of scrimmage.
48. Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
49. The quarterback has a seven-second "pass clock." If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, the play is dead, the down is consumed and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off, the 7-second rule is no longer in effect. If the QB is standing in the end zone at

the end of the 7-second clock, the play will be considered a safety, and the ball will become the opposing team's ball. **The opposing team will also be awarded 2 points.** It should not be a safety if down is consumed.

### **XIII. Receiving**

50. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
51. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. All motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted toward the line of scrimmage.
52. A player must have at least one foot in bounds when making a reception.
53. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
54. Interceptions change the possession of the ball at the point of interception. Interceptions are the only changes of possession that do not start on the 5-yard line.
55. Interceptions are returnable. **Point After Attempt (PAT)** interceptions can be returned for 2 points regardless of PAT value.

### **XIV. Rushing the Passer**

56. All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback can defend on the line of scrimmage.
57. Once the ball is handed off, the seven-yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
58. A special marker, or the referee, will designate a rush line seven yards from the line of scrimmage. Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.
  - a. A legal rush is:
  - b. Any rush from a point 7 yards from the defensive line of scrimmage.
  - c. A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off by the quarterback.
  - d. If a rusher leaves the rush line early (breaks the 7 yard area), they may return to the rush line, reset and then legally rush the quarterback.
  - e. If a rusher leaves the rush line early and the ball is handed off before he/she crosses the line of scrimmage, he/she may legally rush the quarterback.
  - f. A penalty may be called if:
    - i. The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff or pass – illegal rush (5 yards from the line of scrimmage and first down).
    - ii. Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped – offside (5 yards from line of scrimmage and first down).
    - iii. Any defensive player not lined up at the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed or handed off – illegal rush (5 yards from the line of scrimmage and first down).
  - g. Special circumstances:
    - i. Teams are not required to rush the quarterback with the seven second clock in effect.
    - ii. Teams are not required to identify their rusher before the play.
59. Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however, during the passer's drop and throughout their entire throwing motion, the passer cannot be touched above the upper waist in any material way. Material is defined as consequential, meaningful, significant, or substantial. **This is a judgement call by the official.**
60. The offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has the right to a clear path to the quarterback, regardless of where they line up prior to the snap. If the "path or line" is occupied by a moving offensive player, then it is the offense's responsibility to avoid the rusher. Any disruption to the rusher's path and/or contact will result in an impeding the rusher penalty. **If**

**the offensive player does not move after the snap, then it is the rusher's responsibility to go around the offensive player and to avoid contact.**

61. A sack occurs if the quarterback's flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. A safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team's end zone.

#### **XV. Flag Pulling**

62. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball-carrier is in full possession of the ball.
63. Defenders can dive to pull flags but cannot tackle, hold or run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.
64. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball-carrier's possession at any time.
65. If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during the play, the player is down immediately upon possession of the ball and the play ends.
66. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball.
67. Flag guarding is the act of a ball carrier denying a defender the opportunity to capture their flag in any blocking or obstructive way.
68. Flags may not be tucked in pants, tucked under jerseys, worn improperly, looped around the waist belt, or knotted.
69. The ball carrier shall not flag guard by flailing of arms, using their hands, arms, elbows, or extremely dipped shoulders to deny the opportunity of an opponent to remove a flag.
70. The ball carrier may not swat a defender's hands away nor pin the flag against their body using the ball or hands. Officials may call flag guarding if they judge that a ball carrier's running motion gave the ball carrier a decisive advantage over the defender and the running motion caused part of the ball carrier's body to block a de-flagging attempt.
71. Flag guarding shall not be called if there is no defensive player within reasonable distance to capture the flag.

**PLEASE KEEP THE MOST CURRENT COPY OF THE RULES WITH YOU AT ALL TIMES FOR REFERENCE & REMINDERS.**

Any questions, concerns, problems, injuries, or positive suggestions please email the JBLM Sports & Fitness Director or call our JBLM sports office at 253-967-2405. We are looking forward to a safe, fun, positive, and memorable season. Thank you for your participation!

Please be a "Volunteer" & Thank a VOLUNTEER!

**Our Amazing CYS Sports STAFF: (253)-967-2405**

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**Please see the Sports & Fitness Director or Sports Program Staff for any questions, problems, concerns, or suggestions to improve our program.**