



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

Youth Sports



YMCA OF GREATER SAN ANTONIO

YMCA Mission: To put Judeo-Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

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TEAM DUTIES

1. Both teams are responsible for cleaning up their bench immediately after the game.
2. During the game, there shall be a limit of three (3) coaches on the sideline. One (1) head coach and two (2) assistants.
 - a. Offensive coaches are allowed in the huddle
 - b. Defense coaches may not be in the secondary
3. All spectators must be seated on the sideline opposite the team and cannot stand or sit in the end zone. Only cleared coaches and registered participants allowed on the bench.

SPORTSMANSHIP

1. The YMCA does not keep official game scores or records. However, the score is documented during the game to promote a learning environment.
2. Unsportsmanlike conduct of the players or coaches is not tolerated. If the behavior persists, the individual will be asked to leave the facility.
3. **Any player, coach, or spectator ejected will be suspended for at least one (1) game and will be placed on one (1) year probation. If ejected again during the probation period, the individual will be removed from the program.** All violations are documented and shared with the Youth Sports Director and Executive Sports Director. The YMCA will notify the offender within 48 hours.
4. If the atmosphere of the game feels unsafe or the YMCAs Values are not being adhered to, the referee or YMCA staff member can end the game.
5. If a team has less than the number of required players, the opposing team will be asked to share players in order to provide competition. We make every effort to play each scheduled game.

YMCA YOUTH SPORTS KEY PHILOSOPHIES

1. Everyone must play at least half the game.
2. Coaches are volunteers. They are not paid.
3. Our focus is on fun and skill development.
4. Sportsmanship above all.
5. We promote a family atmosphere.

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PLAYER SAFETY

1. To protect the safety of all players in the program, any participant wearing a cast will prohibit them from participating in YMCA games or practices. Exceptions can be made with approval from the Sports Director and documented approval from a physician.
2. Soft casts will be permitted if approved by officials.
3. All types of jewelry (earrings, bracelets, necklaces, etc.) must be removed before the game.
4. Adaptive aids are approved on a case by case basis.

UNIFORM

Each player must wear their YMCA issued jersey. The jersey must be tucked into the player's shorts or pants. The player's shorts or pants cannot have pockets. Hats may not be worn. Additionally, only rubber-soled/cleated shoes may be worn. Metal cleats and Bulldog cleats (cleat on the front of the shoe) are not permitted.

EQUIPMENT

1. Flags - The YMCA furnished flags must be used. Three flags will be worn (one on each hip and one in the back). Flags may not be wrapped, tied, or tucked around the flag belt and must be in clear view of the defending player. Excess belt material must be wrapped around the belt or tucked in the waistband so as not to have the appearance of a flag.
2. Football Size
 - a. 8 and under = Pee Wee
 - b. 9 - 10 years = Junior
 - c. 11 - 12 years = Junior
3. Only kneepads may be worn.
4. Mouthpieces are required.
5. Braces must be inspected and approved by the game official prior to the game.

GAME FIELD

1. Minimum of five (5) and a maximum of seven (7) players on the field.
2. All age groups will play 7-on-7.
3. Games will be played on half of a regulation size field - 45 yards. (53 yards wide - field size can vary based on facilities).
4. Field size may need to be modified depending on space at various YMCA's and outside facilities.
5. The field will be divided into three, 15-yard zones. The offense will have three (3) plays to advance the ball into the next zone to get a first down.
6. In the last zone, teams will have four (4) downs to score a touchdown.
7. All drives start at the 45-yard line going in.

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COACHES

1. Maximum of three (3) coaches. One (1) head coach and two (2) assistant coaches.
2. One coach is allowed on the field for offense only. Defensive coaches will be with their team behind the offense.
3. Players and coaches are the only individuals permitted on the sideline during the game. Players and coaches are to be on one side of the field and spectators and parents on the other side. There will be no coaching from the spectator area.
4. There is no coaching permitted once the center has touched the ball. There will be a 5-yard penalty assessed for violation of this rule (after one warning per team per game). Defensive coaches should not be in the secondary.

GENERAL RULES

Each YMCA Flag Football game will consist of four 10 minute quarters. There will be a one (1) minute break after the first quarter and the third quarter. Each game's halftime will be two (2) minutes long. Additionally, three 1 minute timeouts will be awarded per game.

1. SCORING

- Clock will stop for touchdowns, safeties, and injuries and will restart on the following possession.
- Player's hips with both flags attached must cross the goal line.
- Touchdown = 6 points
- Point(s) after Touchdown from the 5-yard line.
- 1 point for a run
- 2 points for a pass. Receiver must be beyond the line of scrimmage.

2. STARTING THE GAME

- Each team will provide a team captain.
- A coin toss will determine which team will receive the ball first. The home team will call the toss in the air and select offense, defense, or differ.
- The ball will be given to the team that chooses to play offense.
- Play will start on the 45-yard line.
- Kickoffs are not permitted to start the game.

3. AVOIDING CONTACT

It is the defensive player's responsibility to avoid contact with the offensive player on routes. The ball carrier may not be pushed or shoved out of bounds.

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4. FLAG STRIPPING

Only the ball carrier can intentionally strip an offensive player's flag — personal foul of 10 yards.

5. STRIPPING THE BALL

Players may not intentionally strip the ball from the ball carrier's arm — personal foul of 10 yards.

6. LUNGING/DIVING FOR FLAG

The player's feet leaving the ground by lunging or diving for the flag is illegal — personal foul of 10 yards.

7. TRIPPING

Tripping or using the leg to stop an offensive player is illegal — personal foul of 10 yards.

8. DE-FLAGGING

- It is illegal to prematurely pull a player's flag — personal foul.
- A ball carrier will be down where their flag drops.
- Flag guarding, pushing a defenders hands away, stiff-arming, or covering flags is illegal.
- Penalties will be assessed from the spot of the foul — personal foul.
- Jumping or diving while running with the ball to avoid being stopped by a defensive player or to cross the goal line will be considered flag guarding.
- Jumping to avoid physical contact with other players — personal foul-call is up to the referee.

9. BLOCKING IS NOT ALLOWED.

10. PUNTING IS NOT ALLOWED.

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DEFENSE

- The defensive line of scrimmage is one yard in front of the ball.
- All defensive linemen will be in a two-point stance.
- No defensive player may line up directly across from the center (no nose guard).
- All other defensive players may line up no closer than one yard from the defensive line of scrimmage.
- The rusher may not run over the screener. The rusher may not pull the screener toward him or push him away — personal foul of 10 yards.
- All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of seven (7) yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball is handed off, the seven-yard rule is no longer in effect, and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
- A unique marker, or the referee, will designate a rush line seven yards from the line of scrimmage.
- A legal rush is any rush from a point that is seven (7) yards from the defensive line of scrimmage.
 - A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off by the quarterback.
 - If a rusher leaves the rush line early (breaks the 7-yard area), they must return to the rush line, reset, and then legally rush the quarterback.

OFFENSE

- Any Snap that hits the ground will be considered dead.
- The offensive team has 25 seconds to snap the ball into play after the referee marks the ball ready for play. Once the ball is snapped, the play is LIVE. All offensive players are eligible ball carriers and receivers.
- All offensive linemen will be in a two-point stance.
- There will be NO swinging gate formations.
- The ball may be snapped by either: (a) the center may turn and hand the ball to QB, (b) an under center snap, or (c) a shotgun.
- Quarterback and center sneaks are not allowed. This means that the quarterback cannot run the ball between the guards.
- At least four (4) players must line up on the line of scrimmage. There will be a 5-yard penalty if there are less than four linemen.
- Only one player may be in motion when the ball is snapped. All other players must be set for one second prior to the snap of the ball. There will be a 5-yard penalty if there is more than one player in motion.
- In the case of a fumble, the ball will be marked dead and considered a down of play at the place where the ball touches the ground.
- Interception returns are not permitted. Possession will switch on interceptions.
- The QB can run outside the guards only. No direct runs up the middle.

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PENALTIES

- Personal fouls
 - Personal fouls and unsportsmanlike conduct will result in a 10-yard penalty. If the foul is called on the offense, the penalty will be a loss of down. If the foul is called on the defense, the penalty will be an automatic first down.
 - Personal fouls may be judgment calls and could result in an unsportsmanlike conduct if considered overly aggressive or malicious.
- Punching or striking the ball, or stripping or attempting to steal the ball from a player in possession.
- Throwing the runner to the ground.
- If the site director or referee witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, or any unsportsmanlike conduct, the game will be stopped, and the player will be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the referee's discretion, and the decision is FINAL.
- Minor Penalties
 - Flag stripping, lunging or diving for the flag
 - Illegal contact (offensive or defensive)
 - Flag Guarding
 - Everything else will be a 5-yard penalty and the down will be replayed unless the penalty advances the offense into the next zone resulting in a first down.

REFEREES

- The referee shall be the sole judge on the field of play.
- The referee can ask coaches, parents, players, and spectators to leave the field of play or the facilities to maintain a pleasant atmosphere, and control of the game.
- If a coach, player, or spectator, is ejected from a game, that person(s) is automatically removed from the next game and will be reviewed by the Sports Director and Executive Director. Should another incident occur within the same season, the coach, spectator, or player may be ejected from the league permanently.
- The referee may stop, suspend, or terminate the game because of the elements of interference.

SUBSTITUTIONS

The goal of the YMCA is to provide all children with equal playing time. All players must play a minimum of 50% of the game. If a player is sick or injured, the referee must be notified before the start of the game. If a player ends up becoming ill or injured during a game, he or she can be substituted out.

