



**Parks, Recreation & Tourism**

# **2023 Spring 7v7 Flag Football Rules and Policies**

Chesapeake Parks, Recreation, and Tourism  
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# 7v7 FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

## PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

- Age Requirement - Boys and girls ages **7-8, 9-10, and 11-13** as of March 31 of the current year.

## TEAMS AND COACHES

- Each team will consist of a maximum of 14 players assigned to a roster: seven players on a field (**minimum 5 on field**).
- There will be a limit of four coaches per team: one head coach and three assistants.
- The spring 7v7 flag football league is a separate league from the fall flag and tackle leagues and rosters will not carryover from the spring to the fall season.

## SCHEDULE

- **Number of Games** - Games will be played in accordance with the schedule set by the Parks and Recreation Department. Teams will play as close to 8 games as possible.
- **Championship and Post Season Play** – The top two teams from the U10 and U13 age divisions will advance to a championship game. There will be no playoffs for the U8 age division.

## Practice

- **Practice Limits** – Teams are limited to three meetings per week, including practices, scrimmages, chalkboard sessions, and games. If teams have one game within a calendar week, teams are limited to two 1-hour practice sessions. If teams have two games within a calendar week, teams are limited to one 1-hour practice session. Practices are not permitted on the same day as a scheduled game unless the game was postponed on that day.

## FLAG LEAGUE PLAYING RULES

- **Starting Lineup** – Teams must have at least five players on the field to start the game. If a team starts with less than 7 players on the field, any players who arrive late may be put into the game at the next stoppage of play.
- **Required Playing Time** – Each player is required to play on either an offensive squad or defensive squad during the 1st quarter, 2nd quarter, and 3rd quarter of each game. Participation must be uninterrupted while that offensive squad or defensive squad is on the field unless injury or sickness occurs.
  - During the fourth quarter if all playing time requirements have been met, unlimited substitutions may be used
  - If a player arrives after the start of the game, the coach will play the tardy player in the 2nd and 3rd quarters. The coach has the option to play this player in the 4th quarter. If a player arrives after the start of the 2nd quarter, the coach will play this player in the 3rd quarter. The coach has the option to play this player in the 4th quarter. If a player arrives during or after halftime, the coach has the option to play this player.

- **Offensive and Defensive Rules**

- Offensive players can receive the ball from the center anywhere behind the line of scrimmage.
- All players are eligible to receive a pass.
- The set position for an interior lineman is hand on knees in a two-point stance. The set position for an uncovered lineman other than an interior lineman and/or all other players is either the two-point stance or standing.
- The center shall be allowed sufficient time to snap the ball. Determination of “sufficient time” shall be at the discretion of the referee whose sole purpose is to protect the safety of the child centering the ball. To prevent neck injuries, center attempting “shotgun snaps” shall be afforded a safe distance by the defender. A defensive player who fails to adhere to the official’s definition of “sufficient time” to allow the center snap the ball shall be penalized “Unsportsmanlike Conduct Dunking the Center.” Penalty: 15 yards.
- 3 or 4 point stances are prohibited and shall result in an “Illegal procedure” penalty.
- Center cannot carry the ball from scrimmage but can receive a pass.
- The ball carrier must run to avoid tacklers. Deliberate charging of an opponent is a 10 yard penalty. Brushing contact and unavoidable contact is not willful charging.
- A ball carrier may not stiff arm a defender or protect his flags by deflecting the defender with the use of his hands. A ball carrier that impedes the legal attempt by the defender to de-flag him by protecting his flags with his hands shall be penalized for “Flag Guarding.” Penalty: 10 yards.
- No forceful charging or aggressive blocking by players is permitted. Penalty: 10 yards.
- If a defensive player tackles a ball carrier, **penalty is half the distance to the goal if offensive team is across midfield (40 yard line), if prior penalty is 10 yards and an automatic first down.** If the runner was in the clear, and in the opinion of the referee would have scored except for being tackled, a touchdown shall be allowed.
- If a defensive player reaches across the body of the ball carrier to pull flag and contact is made which impedes the progress of the runner, the responsibility of the contact lies with the defensive players. Penalty 10 yards.
- An offensive player in front of the ball carrier must stop or alter his run to avoid intentional contact with a defender. Penalty: 10 yards.
- The ball carrier is down at the spot where the tackler pulls out one of the flags. Unnecessary roughness by tackler or elbowing by runner is 10-yard penalty. In the event of a flag dropping without being pulled by a tackler, the ball is dead at this point.
- Flag Guarding – Ball carriers shall not use hands to guard their flags. Penalty 10 yards.
- Offensive Line - A minimum of 3 players must be on the line of scrimmage.
- Defensive Line - A minimum of 2 players must be on the line of scrimmage.

- Players may not interlock their legs at the line of scrimmage. The defense shall position themselves in a “heads-up” position when lining up across from an offensive interior lineman.
- A player leaving his feet to go over an opposing player shall be penalized for “Hurdling.” In the open field, game officials shall determine if the offensive player gained an unfair advantage by hurdling. Penalty: 10 yards.
- Quarterback may run prior to or after rusher crosses line of scrimmage.
- **Rushing the passer**
  - 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 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 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.
  - If a rusher leaves the 7-yard line before the snap, he/she may immediately drop back to act as defender with no offside penalty enforced.
  - Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however, NO contact can be made with the quarterback in any way. Blocking the pass or attempting to block the pass and then making contact with the passer will result in a roughing the passer penalty.
  - 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.
- **Unsportsmanlike Conduct** - 10 yards and/or ejection.
- **First Downs** - A team makes the first down when the ball advances to or beyond the next designated 20 yard marker in four downs or less.
- **Scoring** - After touchdowns an extra point try may be permitted. Only passing and running attempts - no kicks. A team can start at the 10 yard line for 2 extra points, or at the 5 yard line for 1 extra point.
- **Possession** - All drives will begin from the 20-yard line
  - Exceptions:
    - interceptions
    - If the defense stops the opposing team prior to them crossing midfield, the next drive will begin at the 40-yard line.

- **Kicking and Punting**

- There will be no kick offs in the fall flag league. When teams start a new possession, they will start at their own 20-yard line.
- There will be no punting in the flag league. If a team elects to punt, the opposing team will get the ball at their own 20 yard line.

- **Fumbles**

- A fumble is dead at the point the ball touches the ground after coming in contact with offensive player and goes to the team who fumbles or dropped the ball.
- The ball cannot advance forward on a fumble.

- **Blocking**

- **No blocking is allowed.** The offensive player may protect the player with the ball by screening as done in basketball. Players may use the open palm or forearm to block.
- Screening shall be defined as an offensive player maintaining a position between the defensive player and the player with the ball. No part of the screener's body except their feet may be in contact with the ground. (No 3-point stance). Movement of the screener's body that causes contact with the defender is considered an illegal screen. The screener may not cause intentional contact with their elbows, forearms, hands, head, shoulders, hips. Incidental contact is unavoidable. Whether stationary or not, all blocking violations are 10-yard penalties.
- A defensive player must go around an offensive player at all times. They may touch the screener with their hands only to maintain their balance in going around the screener. Pushing, pulling or charging across a legal screener is a charging violation. Penalty: 10 yards.
- Any use of other parts of the body to block is prohibited and a player shall be penalized. "Illegal Block."
- A player may not leave his feet to block. This will result in an "Illegal Block."
- Blocking shall occur only in the area between the player's shoulders to his waist on the front of his body. A player who blocks below the waist ("Illegal Block") trips another player ("Tripping") or blocks a player in the back ("Clipping") shall be penalized.
- If an offensive player legally engages a defender in a blocking position and that defender subsequently turns his back, the player is allowed to continue his block, even if it occurs in the back, until the defender breaks contact from the offensive blocker.

- **Length of Games**

- All games will consist of 4 quarters, 10 minutes each
- **Time outs** - Each team will have two one-minute time outs per half. Time outs do not carry over.

- In the event a game must be suspended because of conditions which make it impossible to continue play, the head referee shall declare it an official game if one complete half or more of the game has been played. If less than one-half of the game has been played, the game will be rescheduled from the start.
- The game clock will run continuously without stop until the 2 minute mark of each half.
- **Time period between quarters and halves** - There will be a one-minute period between each quarter and a five-minute period between the halves.
- **Mercy Rule** - At the beginning of the 4th quarter if a team is ahead by 3 touchdowns a running clock will be in effect except for injuries or time outs. In the event a team comes back within 2 touchdowns or less, the regulation clock will be in effect at the time.
- **Overtime Procedure** –Each team has four downs to score from the ten-yard line to establish a winner. If at any point there is a turnover to the defense, the play is dead at that point and cannot be advanced by the defensive team. However, it will result in the loss of any remaining offensive downs. If the game is still tied after one round of this procedure, the game will be over and remain a tie.
  - A coin flip will determine which team has first try.
  - Extra point tries will be made. No Kicks will be allowed.
  - Time Outs – Each team will be allowed one time-out lasting one minute during each tie breaker four down series.
- **2-Minute Policies and Mechanics** - The clock will stop in the final 2 minutes of each half for:
  - Team time-out - clock restarts on the snap
  - Incomplete or illegal forward pass - starts on the snap
  - Out-of-bounds - restarts on the snap
  - Safety - starts on the snap
  - First down – starts on the ready whistle
  - Fumble – starts on the ready whistle
  - Touchdown – restarts on next offensive snap; extra point tries are untimed
  - Penalty and administration - dependent on previous play (EXCEPTION: Delay of game ALWAYS starts on the snap)
  - Referee’s time-out - starts at his/her discretion
  - Turnover / Turnover on downs – starts on snap
  - Team attempting to conserve time illegally - starts on the ready whistle

- Team attempting to consume time illegally - starts on the snap
- Inadvertent whistle - starts on the ready whistle
- **Post Season Play**
  - **Overtime Format** – If a play-off or championship game ends in a tie, the regular season overtime procedure will be used to decide a winner.
    - If a tie exists after each team has had the ball, the teams will try again in the same order, until a winner is established.
  - Tie Breaking Procedures – If there is a tie in the final standings the following criteria will be used to break the tie. After the first-place team has been determined, revert back to #1 to determine remaining places from remaining teams.
    - Head-to-head result(s) between tied teams
    - If teams split in head-to-head games, point differential in those games will be used.
    - Record against common opponents
    - If teams are still tied, points against in games against common opponents for the tied teams will be used.
    - If still tied, points against in all games will be used.
    - If still tied, a coin flip will be used to determine standings.
- **Officials** - There will be two officials per game.

## Equipment

- **Shoes** - Official rubber molded shoes or tennis shoes may be worn.
- **Jerseys** – Coaches who registered as a team must provide jerseys for the team. Players who registered individually will be provided a departmental issued jersey.
- **Mouthpieces** – are required and may be transparent or in color. Elbow pads and kneepads are optional.
- **Flags** - will be provided by the Department.
- **Shorts/pants** - Shorts or pants with belt loops and/or pockets must be taped.
- **Ball size** – U8 will use a pee wee size ball, U10 will use a junior size ball, and U13 will use a youth size ball.

## Playing Field

- 80 yards x 40 yards plus two ten-yard end zones. First down lines will be marked every 20 yards.