



Parks, Recreation & Tourism

2022 Youth Flag Football Rules and Policies

Chesapeake Parks, Recreation, and Tourism
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FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

- Age Requirement - Boys ages 5-8 as of July 31st 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.
 - **Coaches** - There will be a limit of four coaches per team: one head coach and three assistants. Once coach must be on the field to huddle players on offense and defense. Only the child/children of the head coach and one assistant coach will be placed on their team during the draft.

SCHEDULE

- **Number of Games** - Games will be played in accordance with the schedule set by the Parks, Recreation and Tourism Department. Teams will play as close to 8 games as possible.
- **Championships and Post Season Play** - there will be no season champion, or any post season games in the Training Football League. The program is designed to teach the basic fundamentals of football in a fun setting, without the pressures of winning or losing. Game scores and team standings will not be kept in the Training League.

PRACTICE

- **Practice Limits** - Teams are limited to three 1½ hour practice sessions, including scrimmages and chalkboard sessions, within a calendar week. If teams have one game within a calendar week, teams are limited to two 1½ hour practice sessions. If teams have two games within a calendar week, teams are limited to one 1½ hour practice session. Practices are not permitted on the same day as a scheduled game, unless the game was postponed on that day. During school nights, the Training League players are to practice no later than 8:00 PM.
- **Sundays** - Games and practice will not be held on Sundays.
- **Scrimmages** - Teams may scrimmage against teams in their age category within their athletic area. Teams are limited to two pre-season scrimmages in their age category with the other Chesapeake athletic areas. These scrimmages must be approved by the Parks, Recreation and Tourism Department. No practices or scrimmages will be allowed with teams other than City of Chesapeake teams.

FLAG LEAGUE PLAYING RULES

- The flag football program provides youngsters with the opportunity to enjoy the game and develop and practice football skills at an early age. Conventional football does not accomplish these goals because young players do not get the opportunity to learn and practice the various skills of the game. The average youngster can learn to play and enjoy football with good instruction and day-to-day experience.
- For the beginner, the learning experience must be fun, with ample opportunity to practice all the fundamental of the sport.

- The Flag League Football Program should be organized to teach and develop football skills, teamwork, and sportsmanship and to have fun. This is an important period in every child's development. All players should be encouraged to do their best by managing personnel. The Flag League should be fun. If it isn't fun, it isn't a recreational program.
- The key to success is careful selection of coaches. If the goal is to provide a program with maximum benefits, only the very best people should be selected to serve.
- The overall concept of the Flag League should be total participation in a congenial environment under the supervision of competent and concerned adults. The leadership must reflect a positive and constructive direction tempered with patience. If this program is worth doing, it should be done well.
- **Age Limit** - Players must be **five** years of age as of **July 31st** of the current year and cannot turn nine years of age as of **July 31st** of the current year.
- **Roster Limit** - There will be a maximum of 14 players on a team.
- **Game Player Limit** - Teams must begin and end game with 7 players on the field.
- **Required Playing Time**
 - Each player is required to start and play in two full quarters on both offense and defense. Participation must be uninterrupted while that offensive squad or defensive squad is on the field unless injury or sickness occurs. No special teams assignments. (Exception) Kick-off and kick-off receiving team. This playing time will not count as playing time and any players may be used.
 - A coach who has a player arrive after the start of the game but prior to the start of the third quarter must play him in two full quarters of playing time. However, if a player arrives after the start of the third quarter, the coach has the option to play this player or not in the fourth quarter. If the tardy player is placed in the game at the beginning of the quarter, he cannot be replaced unless an injury occurs.
- **Offensive and Defensive Rules**
 - Offensive player 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 and assume a blocking position. 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, a 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 and assume the blocking position 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 10 yards penalty. Officials will use the same judgment on charging and blocking by offensive or defensive players as in basketball. 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 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, 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 4 players must be on the line of scrimmage. **Defensive Line** - A minimum of 3 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.
- If the defensive team makes a stop behind the 20 yard line, the opposing team would start the next drive at the 40 yard line.
- **Unsportsmanlike Conduct** - 10 yards and/or ejection.
- **First Downs** - A team makes the first down when the ball advances to or beyond the field designated 20-yard markers in four downs or less.
- **Scoring** - After touchdowns an extra point try may be permitted. Only passing and running attempts - no kicks.

- **Kicking**

- **Kicking rules only apply to the Spring 7 on 7 league. There will be no kicking in the fall flag league.**
- Kickoffs will be at the 45-yard line on a 100-yard field and the 35-yard line on an 80-yard field. If kick goes out of bounds, ball is placed at the point it goes out or the 50-yard line on a 100-yard field and the 40-yard line on an 80-yard field, whichever is to the offensive team's advantage.
- Receiving team must line up inside their 45-yard line on a 100-yard field and 35-yard line on an 80-yard field and have 3 players on the line.
- No on-sidekicks allowed. Penalty: 5 yards.
- The kickoff is always the possession of the receiving team.
- The ball may be advanced by the receiving team after it touches the ground.

- **Punts**

- 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. Exception: 4th down situation.
- The ball cannot advance forward on a fumble.

- **Blocking**

- 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.
- 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. "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.
- 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.

- No defensive player can line up on the defensive line in front of the offensive center/snapper. Illegal Formation. Penalty: 10 yards.
- 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.
- **Length of Games**
 - All games will consist of four quarters, eight minutes each.
 - 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.
 - Regulation clock will be in effect.
 - **Time period between quarters and halves** - There will be a one-minute period between each quarter and a five-minute period between the halves.
 - **Time outs** - Each team will have two one-minute time outs per half. Time outs do not carry over.
- **Officials** - There will be two officials per game. In the event of no officials, two coaches may be asked to officiate.
- **Equipment**
 - **Care and Return**- The Chesapeake Parks, Recreation and Tourism Department furnishes necessary equipment to operate the Training Football Program. It is the coach's responsibility to make sure the equipment is properly cared for and returned to the Department within ten days of the last played game of their season.
 - **Shoes** - Official rubber molded shoes or tennis shoes may be worn.
 - **Jerseys** - Departmental sport shirts will be utilized.
 - **Shorts** – Shorts may not have any pockets.
 - **Mouthpieces** – are required and may be transparent or in color. Elbow pads and kneepads are optional.
 - **Ball Type** – Pee Wee size.
 - Flags will be provided by the Department.
- **Playing Field** - 80 yards long plus two 10-yard endzones.