



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Spring 2018 Spirit Flag Football Rules

YMCA GOAL

- YMCA Spirit Flag Football is a competitive league that develops athletics and expects good sportsmanship all while continuing to promote youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.

PERSONNEL

- Each team shall play with: 6 players (offense & defense) for all grades.
- A team may begin game with only 5 in attendance.

INDIVIDUAL PLAYING TIME

- All players are required to play in half the game at any position (offense or defense).
- Coach can substitute at any time during a dead ball. (must get officials attention)
- Players may play same position throughout the game/season, do not have to rotate positions during game/season.

PRACTICES

- Practice will be scheduled by the coach in conjunction with teams members. A team is allowed two practices a week during season opener. Reminder: Outside facilities are open to the public; you may have to share with other YMCA Teams or other organizations.

UNIFORMS

- Teams may wear their own uniforms or can wear the YMCA Jr. Huskers red/black reversible jersey for league.
- Jersey must be tucked in with flag belt on outside of jersey.
- **NO** tying of flag belts allowed the result will be unsportsmanlike penalty and player must sit out remainder of game.

EQUIPMENT

- Mouth guard is required.
- All grades: Football cleat, turf or tennis shoes are allowed (no steal spikes allowed).
- Flags will be available at game site, used for games only and returned to spot where picked up.

GAME LENGTH

- A game will consist of two 24-minute halves with a 3-minute halftime. **Again – 2 one minute time-outs per game allowed per team.**
- The offensive team will have 30 seconds to call a play. Failure to do so will result in a 5-yard penalty.
- 30 sec play clock will begin once official marks defensive 5 yard line (arm will be up to start 30 sec play clock).
- Successive delay of game penalties in order to run out the clock will result in lost of down and unsportsmanlike penalty. (please do your best to keep play moving)
- **Last 2 minutes of the game if score is within 8 pts or less. The team that is behind and has the ball on offense the clock will stop if ball carrier runs out of bounds, all penalties and incomplete passes. Clock will start back up in those last 2 minutes at snap of ball.**

SCORING

- A touchdown shall be 6 points.
- A point after: run = 1 point pass = 2 points.
- A safety shall be 2 points.
- A defensive interception return for a touchdown on an extra point attempt (pass) will result in 1 point.
- **At the goal line and/or first down marker (quarterback only) must have entire body (flag belt and ball) cross the goal line for a score. This prevents QB just reaching ball forward not giving defense chance to pull flag belt. If second exchange occurs to running back/receiver then they are allowed to extend ball over goal line for score.**

START OF GAME

- The game is started with the captains/coaches meeting with the referee and flipping the coin, with the winning captain given the choice of choosing a goal or possession of ball. Teams switch at halftime.

ONE ON ONE SITUATIONS

- When a defensive player is trying to evade the ball carrier from an offensive player, the defensive player must try to get around offensive players and NOT go through opponent to get to ball carrier. There is no holding or **aggressive** pushing.
- When a defensive player holds a position, the offensive player (ball carrier) may **NOT** run through the defensive player but must try to evade defensive player.

NO BLOCKING ALLOWED

- There will be NO blocking by offensive players. A pick or screen is allowed as long as player has arms folded cross chest or down at their side – no arm extension is permitted.
- **Blockers may move their feet in form of a moving screen or pivot around to impede the oncoming rusher but may not extend arms or block through oncoming rusher.**
- Blockers must be in upright position, no dipping of shoulder or head while screening defender. Offensive players must either be in front or behind of ball carrier by 2 yards or more. May not be directly on either side of ball carrier to prevent defense from pulling flag belt – Unsportsmanlike conduct, 10 yard penalty from line of scrimmage.
- Offensive player caught blocking (making excessive contact) with a defensive player the result will be a foul, 5 yard penalty & loss of down.
- Any rough tactics, such as an attempt to run over, push through with hands, the use of extended fists or elbows, or any contact to the head with open hands will be penalized – Unnecessary roughness, 10 yard penalty from point of infraction.
- No holding, clipping or crack back blocks are allowed – Unnecessary roughness, 10 yard penalty from point of infraction.

PASSING

- Passing from behind the line of scrimmage only.
- All players are eligible to catch a forward pass.
- Any number of passes may be made behind the line of scrimmage.

PENALTIES

- Offsides – defensive: result of play or 5 yard penalty; offensive: deadball situation: 5 yard penalty.
- Unnecessary roughness – offensive or defensive: 10-yard penalty from point of infraction.
- Unsportsmanlike conduct – (i.e., swearing, intentional fumble, tying flag, spiking, flag guarding, intentionally pulling flag of non-ball carriers): 10 yard penalty from LOS.
- Delay of game - 5-yard penalty.
- Holding: Offensive – 10 yard penalty from line of scrimmage.
Defensive – 10 yard penalty at end of play, automatic first down.
- Pass Interference: Offensive Pass interference – 5 yard penalty and loss of down.
Defensive Pass interference – 5 yard penalty and automatic first down.
- Intentional Grounding – 5 yard penalty and loss of down.
- If ball is placed between offensive team's own 1 yard line – 13 yard line and should 10 yard penalty occur then result will be half the distance to the goal.

KICK-OFF – PUTTING THE BALL IN PLAY

- No kick-off. The game will start with the offensive team starting at the 10-yard line for: beginning of game, after a score, start of 2nd half, punt into end-zone and after a safety.

HASH MARKS

- New: Ball will be placed on the nearest hash-mark if player's flag belt is pulled between hash & sideline.
- Ball will be placed on the nearest hash-mark if ball carrier runs out of bounds on either sideline.

FIRST DOWNS

- The offensive team will have 4 downs to make it to 20-yard line markings on the field. There are two zones on playing field where first downs can be reached (both 20-yard line markers). Once a team enters a new zone, it is a first down and a new series of 4 downs begins. (Separate field diagram sheet)

OFFENSE

- There must be at least 3 players on line of scrimmage (center plus two others). No more or less than 3 players.
- The players on the line of scrimmage may line up anywhere along the line of scrimmage.
- Quarterback CAN run directly with the ball once receives snap from center.
- All backs can pass, lateral, hand-off or run with the ball.
- Only 1 back in motion at the time the ball is snapped. The player in motion must be 1 yard from the line of scrimmage and may not be moving towards opponent's goal line at the snap.
- **ABSOLUTELY NO CENTER SNEAKS ALLOWED!!**
- Center exchange must be snapped to player NOT on the line of scrimmage.
- Using the "hide out play" by placing a player or players near the side line to deceive opponents is prohibited and will result in unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.

DEFENSE

- All defensive players must be five yards from the line of scrimmage when ball is snapped (officials will set defense back five yards before snap of ball). This will be known as the Rush Line.
- Defense is not limited to amount of rushers, may rush the passer and cross the line of scrimmage at the snap of the ball.
- Defensive player that crosses the five yard rush line prior to the snap of the ball the result will be illegal rush, 5 yard penalty and replay down.
- **Goal Line Defense:** When ball is at opponents 5 yard line or closer to goal line, defense may put as many players on the line of scrimmage to defend against run (these players cannot rush across LOS). Remaining players must be at the 5 yard rush line and will be allowed to cross the line of scrimmage at snap of ball.
- If offense is within 5 yards or less to first down marker, then defense may put as many players on the LOS to defend against run (these players cannot rush across LOS). Remaining players must be at the 5 yard rush line and will be allowed to cross the line of scrimmage at snap of ball.
- A defensive player may not go through an offensive player to get to ball carrier, but must try to evade.

PUNTING

- A team may punt on any down but must first tell referee and defending team.
- No one may rush the punter or jump while the ball is in play. If so, re-kick.
- Any punt that is not caught and hits the ground will be dead at that spot.
- The kicking team cannot cross the line of scrimmage until the ball is kicked.
- A punt that is downed by the receiving team in the end zone will be spotted at the 10-yard line.

DOWNING THE BALL CARRIER

- To down a ball carrier, a player must remove carrier's belt by pulling flag. The defensive player must stop and drop flag at point where flag belt was pulled. Do not throw flag to prevent proper marking of ball – Unsportsmanlike conduct.
- The defensive player must not hold, push nor stop the progress of the ball carrier, but must "attack the flag rather than the carrier".
- Defensive player cannot strip the ball or hit the ball out of the ball carrier's arm/hand but must "attack the flag rather than the ball carrier".
- If the ball carrier accidentally loses the flag belt or falls down, the ball is dead at that spot (receiver is still eligible, but if catches pass, is down at that spot).
- If ball carrier's knee or arm hits the ground, then player is down at that spot.

BALL CARRIER

- A ball carrier shall not protect own flag belt in any way (i.e. swiping away defender, tying flag belt). Result unsportsmanlike conduct.
- Hands and arms must be kept above the waist. No straight/stiff arm is allowed – Unsportsmanlike conduct.
- A ball carrier's teammates must be at least 2 yards in front or back of ball carrier, cannot run along side ball carrier to prevent defender from pulling flag belt. Result unsportsmanlike conduct.
- Ball carrier may not jump into or hurdle defender in order to prevent flag belt from being pulled – Unsportsmanlike conduct, result of 10 yard penalty from LOS. Ball carrier cannot intentionally DIVE forward to advance ball.
- Any time the ball touches the ground, the ball is dead. There are no fumble recoveries in YMCA flag football. The ball belongs to the team that fumbles the ball at that spot. i.e., lateral to ball carrier that hits ground (all grades).
- The ball carrier may spin or jump cut (either laterally or backwards) in order to evade defender.
- All Divisions: any center snap that touches the ground will result in loss of down and ball marked at spot where it touched ground.

COACH CONDUCT:

- Coaches are expected to adhere to YMCA philosophies, coaching guidelines and codes of conduct.
- All Grades: First THREE games of season, ONE coach is allowed to be on the field for offense and defense.
- Last FIVE games of the season. No coaches will be allowed on field, must call plays from sidelines or through substitutions.