

3rd Grade FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

(August 2019)

Spirit of the Rules – Coaches, Players and Parents must remember that the Rules are intended to create the most beneficial experience for ALL players. Questions not explicitly addressed by the Rules will invariably arise, and oftentimes require immediate resolution by Coaches from opposing teams (and/or game officials); when the EAA Flag Football Director is not available to answer concerns, the Coaches must default to the Spirit of the Rules and do what is best for ALL players.

Team encouragement and support in a positive manner is urged. However, all rude or invasive forms of communication to the opponent, coaches, fans or parents will not be tolerated. This could result in a game ejection and will be reviewed by the Flag Football Leadership Team for a possible league suspension or dismissal.

THE PLAYERS

Offense

- Offense will have 6 players on the field, players will play QB in 3rd grade and have five players in addition to the QB on the field
- Motion is allowed
- Pitch or toss plays behind the line of scrimmage are allowed
- Every player should be provided an opportunity during the season to play QB
 - It is not required that every player play QB during the season or in the same game
- QB can either start with the ball on the line of scrimmage (LOS) or 3 to 5 yards behind the LOS, there is no center hiking the ball
- QB will not be allowed to rush the ball past the line of scrimmage
- QB must exchange the ball to a teammate by a handoff, pitch (lateral) or forward pass within 7 seconds, officials or coaches are to inform the QB that it is time to throw the ball
- QB can move, roll out or scramble in any direction but cannot cross the line of scrimmage
- QB cannot be tackled by pulling a flag or if the flag falls off
- If the QB throws an interception, the QB is allowed to pull a flag
- Once the QB hands off, pitches or passes the ball to a teammate the QB cannot get the ball back
- The 5 other offensive players can receive the ball from the QB and advance the ball across the LOS
- A team must field a roster of 5 players for a game. A team that has 5 players will play 5 on defense vs 6 on offense and 5 on offense (including QB) vs 4 on defense (the team that has 6+ players), a team may borrow another player that is part of the 3rd grade flag football program
- All players should be played equally as much as possible
 - Goal is to get the ball into each players hands each game
 - Goal is to get each player a touchdown or extra point each season

- Note: These goals can be challenging to accomplish, parents please have patience

Defense

- The team on defense will field 5 players two yards off the LOS by playing man to man or zone
- Defenders are allowed to cross the LOS once the QB has exchanged the ball to a position player

THE GAME

- An official score will not be kept
- Flip a coin to decide which team will have the ball first, the team winning the coin flip can choose to either have the first possession or the last possession of the game
- A game consists of two 30-minute halves with a five-minute halftime, if both teams have a lot of subs you can choose to skip halftime, begin halftime on a change of possession
- Start games promptly so that both teams will have the same number of possessions, avoid starting a new series of possessions within five minutes prior to the end of the hour
 - Think more like baseball rather than basketball
- The clock is running time, it is okay to go slightly longer to have an even number of possessions
- Possessions after a score, beginning of a game or after half time begin on a team's own 5 yard line
- Each team has four downs to make a first down or score
- After a touchdown, teams try for an extra point from the 5 yard line (PAT = 2pts)
- Teams may pass the ball or run the ball on any play
- Possessions following an interception begin where the intercepting player is down or out of bounds
- All possessions following a team's failure to make a touchdown or first down after four downs results in the defending team getting the ball, there is no punting, prior to turning the ball over on downs:
 - If the team crossed mid field, change of possession occurs at the spot of the ball
 - If the team did not cross mid field, change of possession occurs back at mid field

DURING PLAY

- Players need to line up in a formation with two players on the line of scrimmage and three players off the line of scrimmage, lateral or backwards motion is allowed by one player off the LOS
- The quarterback will start with the ball at the line of scrimmage, play action is allowed and motion is allowed
- There is no rushing the passer by the defense, but the passer must throw the ball or hand it off to another player within 8 seconds of the play starting
- Teams may run or pass the ball, laterals, reverses and reverse passes are allowed behind the LOS

- Only one forward pass is allowed per play
- Forward passes must be thrown from behind the line of scrimmage, a forward pass can be underhand, a shovel pass or behind the back
- A forward pass is complete when a receiver has one-foot land in bounds with possession of the ball before any other part of their body touches out of bounds
- A player receiving a handoff can throw a forward pass as long as they do not cross beyond the LOS
- What is and is not allowed during a play:
 - No blocking
 - No tackling
 - Motion is allowed
 - Pitch or toss plays behind the line of scrimmage are allowed
 - No laterals past the LOS
 - No interference with a receiver before they catch the ball
 - No rushing the quarterback
 - No running beyond the line of scrimmage by the quarterback
 - No flag guarding
 - No stiff arms
 - No jumping, diving, or leaping to avoid having your flag pulled, unless the intent is to avoid an inevitable collision
 - Spinning is allowed to avoid a defender
 - After an offensive player with the ball has passed the line of scrimmage, all other offensive players should stop, no running alongside the person with the ball
 - No covering flags with jerseys, jerseys should be tucked inside flag belts
- Flag Pulling
 - A legal flag pull takes place when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball
 - Defenders should NOT dive to pull flags, this is a safety / technique issue
 - Defenders cannot tackle, hold or run through the ball carrier when pulling flags
 - The ball carrier cannot run through or over a defender
 - It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball carrier's possession
 - If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during the play, the player is down immediately upon possession of the ball and the play is over
 - A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball
 - Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the head, hand, arm or shoulder, or intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey
- The play ends when:
 - A player running with the ball has their flag pulled, has at least one knee hit the ground, falls on the ground, steps out of bounds, crosses into the end zone or fumbles so that the ball lands on the ground (safety issue)
 - Fumbles end a play, we want to avoid kids diving on the ball and each other
 - The ball is spotted where the ball is at the time when a player is ruled down
- All penalties should be first considered teachable moments on how to play the game

correctly and loosely applied, whenever possible, correct them before they occur or consider them “do-overs”, however acts that are clearly committed to gain an advantage need to be dealt with immediately by coaches, if needed to be called:

- Penalties will be called by coaches
- Offensive penalties are 5 yards with replay of the down
- Defensive penalties are 5 yards from the spot of the foul
- Clear interference with a receiver before they have a chance to catch the ball will result in a replay of the down

THE FIELD

- Fields will be striped to be 30 yards wide by 50 yards long plus a 10-yard end zone on each end, total playing surface is 30x70 yards
- A first down line splits the field in half at 25 yards from each goal line
- Cones should be placed at the front corners of each end zone and on both sidelines at the midfield first down marker

Field Dimensions

- 70 yards (210 feet) long/length by 30 yards (90 feet) across/width

10 yards	5 yards	20 yards	20 yards	5 yards	10 yards
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