



## 4th Grade Flag Football Program Overview and Rules

**Program Goal:** Provide participants with introductory football skills instruction and a ton of fun playing flag football within a house league game schedule.

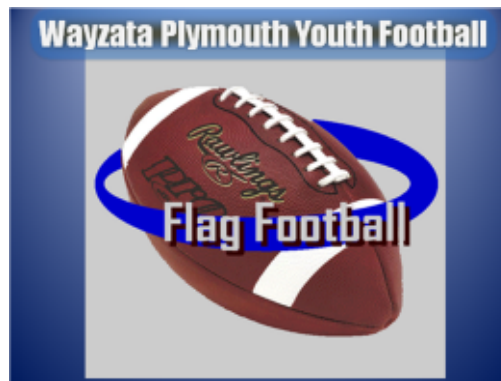
**Program Timing:** August through late October, from 6:15 to 7:45 PM (later in the season the program may shut down earlier due the loss of daylight).

**Program Location:** Wayzata East Middle School

**Equipment:** All players will wear a reversible team jersey that will be provided by the association. Players need to wear tennis shoes (cleats optional) and a mouth guard is required during practice and games.

**Program Coordinator:** Chris Buboltz

**Program Operation:** As with all Wayzata/Plymouth Youth Football (WPYF) programs, we are heavily reliant on parent volunteers for our coaching and other operational requirements. The Flag Football Program is not intended to be a “Drop-Off” league for parents. All players MUST have a responsible party at practice/games (ridesharing and parents may be responsible for multiple kids as long you are not reliant on only a coach).



# WPYF FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

## 4th Grade

### Coaches

1. Coaches are selected based on their willingness to coach and ability to work with young individuals and not solely on their technical football knowledge. Coaches are required to abide by the Coaches Code of Conduct that can be found at the end of this document, and the overall philosophy of the WPYF. Coaches must remember the program is for players and not for the Coaches.
2. *One* coach per team may be present on the actual playing field during Games to assist players in positioning themselves in huddles, directions, etc.
3. Teams will be allowed 30 seconds to huddle, after the huddle the coach may help position players as necessary. The purpose of this rule is to the game moving and the kids engaged. Coaches from both teams should work together to make sure the huddling coach is aware of how much time they have left.
4. Coaches may not interfere in any way with the actual play.
5. Coaches on the field are to remain silent until the play is over and should not yell instructions during the play.

### Equipment

1. Reversible team jersey with integrated flags are provided by the association.
2. **Players are required to wear mouth pieces during all games and practices.**
3. Players must have shirts tucked in pants or shorts with flags properly displayed. Make your best effort to make sure your players do not have any loose ends of their belt or shirt interfering with the ability to pull their flags.
4. Teams will use the football provided by their league.

### Team Formation

1. Players are assigned to teams by elementary school and by registration time stamp.
2. Priorities are first to ensure that players may play on teams with others from the same school.
3. If a school is able to fill one team roster, and fill or nearly fill a second roster, the team rosters will be split by half and combined with another school(s) to form a complete team.

### Weight Restrictions

1. There are no weight restrictions.

### Games

1. Games will consist of **6** active players on the field per team (6 v. 6), plus one coach per team is allowed on the field during play.
  - a. Coaches may not interfere in any way with the actual play.
  - b. Coaches on the field are to remain silent until the play is over, and should not yell instructions during the play.

## Playing Time

1. Coaches must strive to provide equal time for all players present, as well as equal positional rotations.

## Scoring and Timing

1. Games are a total of 40 minutes, played with four 10-minute running quarters. There is a 1 minute break between quarters for water and substitutions, and a 5 min break for halftime.
  - a. It is best to select a parent with a stop watch, timer or smart phone to keep time of play.
2. There will be a 5 minute break at the half.
3. Touchdowns= 6 points
4. PATs include one play successful from the:
  - a. 5 yd line= 1 point
  - Or
  - b. 10 yd line= 2 points
5. **Official scores or win/loss records will not be recorded or reported.**

## Rules and Penalties

### 1. General Rules

- a. Games will consist of 6 active players on the field per team (6v6), plus one coach per team is allowed on the field during play.
  - Coaches may not interfere in any way with the actual play.
  - Coaches on the field are to remain silent until the play is over and should not yell instructions during the play.
- b. Full Team Substitutions will be made every **SIX (6)** plays.
  - If there are not enough players on a team during a game to accomplish a full substitution, coaches will rotate players accordingly to ensure equal play time for all and prevent player(s) from being on the field continuously.
- c. **Full positional rotations will be made at the conclusion of each 10 min quarter.**
  - With smaller roster sizes, spontaneous substitutions may be made “as needed” during dead ball situations/between plays (prior to or after quarter breaks)
    - o i.e. to give a player a rest or for injury
  - Coaches will rotate players accordingly to ensure balanced play time for all and prevent player(s) from being on the field continuously and at same position excessively. If a player is willing and able, he/she should not sit out for more than 6 plays before re-entering the game.
  - WPYF emphasizes balanced, fair playing time for development purposes.
- d. OPEN PLAYBOOK- any FOOTBALL play within reason and legal, is allowed.
- e. Prior to the start of the game, Coaches from both teams should discuss the rules and agree to the terms in which they will mutually enforce penalties in order to remain consistent across both teams.

## 2. Start of Game or Half

- a. There are no kick-offs.
  - Coin-flip to determine who starts on offense/defense.
  - The offensive team begins its possession at its goal line.
    - Upon scoring and change of possession the new offensive team will begin its drive at its own goal line.
  - Standard 4 play and 10 yard first downs will be played.
    - Step off 10 yards from the line of scrimmage and mark first down with a cone.

## 3. Changes in Possession:

- a. Punting Rules:
  - Teams may be allowed to “Punt” on fourth down.
    - Punting Team may designate any active player to punt the football.
    - A coach will snap the ball to the punter and all other active punting team players will be moved behind the punter prior to the snap.
    - The receiving team may not drop more than two (2) players to “receive” the punt.
    - The receiving team may not rush the punter.
    - The receiving team may not return the punt; they will take possession where the ball is first touched.
- b. Turn over on downs:
  - If the offense fails to gain a first down or score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts its drive at the previous line of scrimmage.
- c. Safety:
  - If the QB is “sacked” in the end zone there will be a loss of down and the ball is to be placed at the goal line and the series to continue.
  - There are no safety scoring plays.
  - If the QB is “sacked” in the end zone on 4<sup>th</sup> down the ball will be turned over on downs and the defense will take possession at the 20 yards out from the scoring goal line.

## 4. Equipment Rules (Flags)

- a. Should a player’s flag fall off during play in the back field, the ball is dead and will be spotted at the line of scrimmage **and the offense will be allowed to replay the down.**
- b. If a player’s flag falls off after the line of scrimmage the ball carrier is considered down at the point of the fallen flag.
- c. If a player’s flag falls off before a pass is caught, the player is considered down at the point of the catch.

## 5. Fumble Rules

- a. If the ball hits the ground at any time in the game, it is a dead ball.
  - **Fumbled snaps may be picked up by the QB and play will continue.**
  - All fumbles will be whistled as a dead ball immediately and there will not be loss of possession if the defense recovers the ball (**the exception to this rule is if the fumble occurs on 4<sup>th</sup> down which will result in a turnover on downs**).
    - This rule is to avoid contact.

## 6. Spotting the Ball

- a. The ball will be spotted where:
  - The flag was removed by the defense.
  - Where the ball carrier goes out of bounds.

- Where a ball carrier goes to the ground (intentional or accidental). **Once a player goes to the ground they may not get up and advance the ball.**
- Where the ball lands on the ground from a fumble, see “fumble” rules above.

## 7. Interceptions

- Interceptions may be advanced.
  - Interceptions may not be returned on PAT attempts
  - **Full Team Substitutions should not occur after an interception, unless the turnover happens on the 6<sup>th</sup> play of a series.**

## 8. Offense Specific Rules:

- Legal Motion (lateral or backwards) by one offensive player is allowed pre snap
- The offense is only allowed one (1) designed QB run (Veer or Draw) per 4 down series
- Screening/Blocking for run plays:
  - Reminder that this is a NON-CONTACT league.
  - Offensive players may get in the way, interfere, disrupt angles or pick defensive players.
  - Screening/Blocking is encouraged and is meant to teach the kids the proper angles, footwork and hand placement for open field Heads-up blocking.
    - Offensive players can slow/stop/divert the defense from taking the flag of a runner by:
      - simply getting in the way without contact;
      - or
      - using their open hands on the chest of a defender. With their open hands on a defenders chest they may not displace a defender (i.e. push them backwards with excessive force).
    - Drive blocking the defensive player is NOT allowed in this flag football program
    - Overly overt or aggressive physical engagement with a defensive player is not allowed.
    - Graphic(s) for proper Heads-Up blocking “fit-up”:
      - The following graphics shown below depict closed hand grabbing of the defensive jersey, for flag football encourage your players to have **OPEN hands**; again you are teaching angles, footwork, and hand placement for the “fit-up”.



## 9. Defensive Specific Rules:

- a. Defensive players may not cross the line of scrimmage until either a "5-MISSISSIPPI" count or until the point when the ball leaves the quarterback's hands, whichever comes first
  - **The OFFENSIVE coach is responsible for counting down the rush for the defense. After the snap the coach should clearly say out loud "1-Mississippi, 2-Mississippi, 3-Mississippi, 4-Mississippi, 5-Mississippi".**
  - The "QB-Veer" offensive play will bring into question this rule. Defensive players will be allowed to cross the line of scrimmage to make the play on the QB during this play because there is not a point where the ball leaves the QB's hands. BOTH TEAMS' coaches should use best judgment on this play to ensure fair play.

## 10. Penalties:

- a. Offensive Holding
  - Result in a loss of down and 5 yard penalty from the original line of scrimmage.
    - If on 4<sup>th</sup> down, change possession at the original line of scrimmage.
  - Inside the 10 yard-line of the end-zone half the distance to the goal.
- b. Defensive Holding
  - Result in a replay of the current down and a 5 yard penalty from the original line of scrimmage.
  - Inside the 10 yard-line of the end-zone half the distance to the goal.
- c. Offensive: False Start, delay of game, flag guarding, and illegal formation:
  - Will result in a 5 yard penalty from the original line of scrimmage and replay of the current down.
    - **Definition of flag guarding - A runner shall not flag guard by using their hands, arms, or the ball to deny the opportunity for an opponent to pull or remove the flag belt. A player may use a spin move, however; must keep their arms away from their flag to avoid flag guarding.**
- d. Defensive: Off Side
  - Will result in a 5 yard penalty from the original line of scrimmage and replay of current down. If 5 yard penalty results in first down a new set of downs is awarded.
    - Inside the 10 yard line of the end zone results in half the distance to the goal and replay of current down.
- e. Offensive: Pass Interference
  - Will result in a 10 yard penalty from the line of scrimmage and replay of current down.
  - Inside the 10 yard line of the end zone or results in half the distance to the goal and replay of current down.
- f. Defensive: Pass Interference
  - Will result in a 10 yard penalty from the line of scrimmage and replay of current down. If 10 yard penalty results in first down a new set of downs is awarded.
  - Inside the 10 yard line of the end zone or in the end zone results in half the distance to the goal and replay of current down.

- g. **Unsportsmanlike Behavior, personal fouls, clipping, tripping, head butting, de-flagging players without the ball, straight arming(stiff arming), hurdling, pushing the ball carrier out of bounds, tackling, (any unnecessary and intentional physical contact or just generally acting like a jerk!):**
    - The player's coach may determine to send the player off the field for the remaining series or longer.
    - Offensive - Will result in a 10 yard penalty and loss of down.
      - If on 4<sup>th</sup> down turn over on downs plus 10 yards
    - Defensive – Will result in a 10 yard penalty and automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down.
    - **Definition of straight arming(stiff arming) - A movement made by an offensive player in which he/she extends their arm to ward off a defending player attempting to remove the flag.**
    - Both coaches on the field will mutually and quickly determine if the action of a player committing this type penalty was intended or incidental, a decision to remove a player from the field MUST be respected by the player, the teams, all coaches and parents.
      - This is a NON-CONTACT league. Coaches shall not argue over penalties. Coaches are required to make the player aware that intended Unsportsmanlike behavior is unacceptable and remove the player from the field of play for the remaining series or longer.
      - If there are players committing multiple Unsportsmanlike behavior penalties the Program Coordinator should be contacted.
  - h. **Any activity intentionally directed toward the head, face or eyes by a player will be considered an Unsportsmanlike Penalty.**
    - **Additionally the infracting player will be immediately removed from play for the remainder of the game.**
- 11. An offensive penalty may never score.**
- a. If an Offensive penalty occurs on a scoring play, the result should be the appropriate penalty yardage replay the current down.
    - If 4<sup>th</sup> down change in possession at the original line of scrimmage
  - b. If Defensive penalty occurs on a scoring play, the result will be a score and loss of down on the ensuing possession (i.e. you start your possession on 2<sup>nd</sup> down).

## COACHES CODE OF CONDUCT

I hereby pledge to live up to my obligations as a Coach in the WPYF football program by pursuing the following standards for coaching ethics:

- I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my players ahead of a personal desire to win.
- I will treat each player as an individual, remembering the large range of emotional and physical development for the same age group.
- I will do my best to provide a safe playing situation for my players.
- I will lead by example in demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship to all my players.
- I will provide a sports environment for my team that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol and I will refrain from their use at all youth sports events.
- I will be knowledgeable and adhere to the rules of the organization in which my team will participate and I will teach these rules to my players.
- I will use appropriate coaching techniques for each of the skills I teach.
- I will treat the officials and league staff in an appropriate and respectful manner.
- I will treat all my players and parents with respect and appropriate behavior.
- I will realize that sometimes things are not always accurate and correct and will accept decisions made on the field by the current officials representing the on field authority during game time situations.
- I will remember that I am a youth sports coach and the game is for the children and not the adults.

**Spirit of the Rules** – Coaches, Players, and Parents must remember the rules are defined to create the most beneficial experience for the players. Coaches must remember that the games are to be played for the players and not for the Coaches or Parents creating the Spirit of the Rules.