

Pleasant Grove Youth Association
Flag Football Rules
Grades 3-4, 5-6

Table of Contents

- I. Playoffs and Tie Breakers
- II. Game
- III. Equipment
- IV. Field
- V. Timing and Overtime
- VI. Scoring
- VII. Coaches
- VIII. Live Ball/Dead Ball

I. Playoffs and Tie Breakers

- a. Playoffs will consist of the following:
 - i. Top two regular season records will play for the championship
 - ii. Places 3 and 4 will play for third place
 - iii. Places 5 and 6 will play for fifth place and so on...
 - iv. If there is an odd number of teams, the last place team will not play in the playoffs.
- b. Tie breakers:
 - i. If two teams have the same record at the end of the regular season the tie breaker will be "Points against" meaning the team who has given up the fewest points will get the higher seed. This rule is intended to keep teams from running up the score.

II. Game

- a. At the start of each game, captains from both teams meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who starts with the ball. The visiting team calls the toss.
- b. The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense. The loser of the coin toss has the choice of direction. Possession changes to start the second half to the team that started the game on defense.
- c. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four (4) downs to gain 10 yards for a first down as the drive moves down the field.
 - i. If the offensive team fails to get a first down after three downs, and elect to "punt" on the 4th down, possession of the ball changes and the opposing team starts its drive from its own 5-yard line.
 - ii. If the offensive team goes for it on 4th down and does not get a first down, the opposing team will start its possession from the spot.
 - iii. Offensive teams MUST declare 4th down intent (punt or go for it) prior to the expiration of the 25 second play clock.
- d. Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.

III. Equipment

- a. Participants MUST use the flags/belts purchased by PGYA for the season. No substitute flags/belts will be allowed.
- b. Mouth guards must be worn at all times while on the playing field.

- c. 3rd and 4th grade must use Pee Wee sized footballs. 5th and 6th grade must use Junior sized footballs.
- d. Players must wear shoes. Cleats with exposed metal are not allowed and must be removed.
- e. Players may tape their forearms, hands, and fingers. Players may wear glove, elbow pads and knee pads. Braces with exposed metal are not allowed.
- f. Players must remove all jewelry, hats and do-rags. Winter beanies are allowed.
- g. Players may wear soft shell helmets but they must be secured at ALL times while on the playing field.
- h. Players jerseys must be tucked into shorts or pants if they hang below the belt line.
- i. We recommend players wear shorts or pants that do not have pockets. Shorts or pants with belt loops or pockets must be taped. Games will not be delayed for a player to tape up pockets.
 - i. Flag belts cannot be the same color as shorts or pants.

IV. Field

- a. The field dimensions are approximately 43 yards wide (from sideline to the top of the far side numbers by 70 yards long.
- b. No run zones do not exist. You can run or pass at any point on the field.
- c. Stepping out of the boundary line is considered out of bounds.

V. Timing and Overtime

- a. Games are played on a 40-minute continuous clock with two 20 minute halves.
- b. Halftime is three minutes
- c. Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 25 seconds to snap the ball.
- d. Each team has one timeout per half. If you do not use your timeout in the first half it does not carry over to the second half.
- e. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
- f. In the event of an injury, the clock will stop then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play.
- g. If the score is tied at the end of regulation play, an overtime period will be used to determine a winner. Overtime format is as follows:
 - i. Home team calls the toss to determine the team that chooses to be on offense or defense first.
 - 1. If a second round of overtime must be played, the team that lost the coin toss will get to choose offense or defense for the start of the second round of overtime. This process continues with teams alternating who gets to choose to be on offense or defense to start out during every round of overtime.
 - 2. The referee will determine which end of the field the overtime will be played on.
 - ii. Each team will take turns getting one (1) play from the defense's 5-yard line for one point or the defense's 10-yard line for two points. Whether to go for one or two points is up to the offensive team. Whether or not the team that begins on offense converts the team that started on defense gets a change on offense to win or tie by converting a one or two-point play of their own.
 - 1. Example: Team A starts on offense and chooses to go for one point from the 5-yard line and is successful. Team B is then on offense and can chose to either go for one point from the 5-yard line to tie and force a

second round of overtime or to go for two points from the 10-yard line for the win.

2. If the second team on offense in an overtime round fails to beat or match the team that went first, the team that went first wins.
- iii. Starting with the 2nd overtime, both teams must “go for two” from the 10-yard line
- iv. Starting with the 3rd overtime, each team will get 1 play from the 5-yard line going out from the end zone. The team with the most yards will be the winner. The team with the most yards will be awarded 1 point added to their final score.
- v. Final score will be recorded to include all points scored for each team.
- vi. All regulation period rules and penalties are in effect.
- vii. There are no timeouts.
- viii. Interceptions are returnable in OT, and worth 2 points if returned for a score.

VI. Scoring

- a. Touchdowns: 6 points
- b. Point after touchdown (PAT): 1 point from the 5-yard line or 2 points from the 10-yard line.
 - i. Coaches must declare to go for one or two to set the ball on the correct yard line.
 - ii. For any PAT, teams can run or pass on the attempt.
- c. Safety: 2 points
 - i. A safety occurs when the ball-carrier is declared down in his/her own end zone. Runners can be called down when their flags are pulled by a defensive player, a flag falls out, they step out of bounds, their knee or arm touches the ground, a fumble occurs in the end zone or if a snapped ball lands in or beyond the end zone.
- d. PAT's that are returned for a score by the defense equals 2 points.
- e. Forfeits are scored 28-0 for the winning team.
- f. Coaches should enter the final score into the Sports Engine App. directly after the game.

VII. Coaches

- a. Only two coaches per team are allowed on the sideline.
- b. Must not run the score up on another team. Out of the spirit of good sportsmanship, coaches who find themselves with a sizeable lead should coach the game with the intent of not scoring additional points. (The tie breaker for standings is points scored against your team). Your efforts will be appreciated.

VIII. Live Ball/Dead Ball

- a. The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.
- b. The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage.
 - i. It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on defense or offense enters the neutral zone. In regard to the neutral zone, the official may give both teams a “courtesy” neutral zone notification to allow their players the opportunity to move back behind the line of scrimmage.
- c. A player who gains possession of the ball in the air is considered in bounds as long as the first foot or other body part contacts the ground in the field of play.
- d. The defense may not mimic the offensive team signals by trying to confuse the offensive players, while the quarterback is calling out signals to start the play. This will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.

- e. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
- f. Any official can whistle the play dead.
- g. Play is ruled “dead” when:
 - i. The ball hits the ground.
 - 1. If the ball hits the ground as a result of a bad snap or lateral, the ball is placed where the ball hit the ground.
 - 2. The ball-carrier’s flag is pulled.
 - 3. The ball-carrier steps out of bounds.
 - 4. A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored.
 - 5. The ball-carrier’s knee or arm hits the ground.
 - 6. The ball-carrier’s flag falls out.
 - 7. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one or no flag(s).
 - 8. The 7 second pass clock expires.
 - 9. Inadvertent whistle.
 - 10. Ball-carrier leaves their feet other than jump cuts, spinning or to avoid a downed player on the field of play.

NOTE: There are no fumbles. The ball becomes a dead ball. (If the ball is fumbled forwards then it will be spotted where the ball carrier lost possession)

- ii. If an inadvertent whistle occurs, the offense has two options:
 - 1. Take the ball where the whistle blew and the down is consumed
 - 2. Replay the 11
- h. Running
 - i. The ball is spotted here the ball is when the flag is pulled.
 - ii. The Quarterback may tuck the ball and run across the line of scrimmage if the opposing defense blitzes. If the defense elects not to blitz, the quarterback must remain behind the line of scrimmage until he throws or hands the ball off.
 - iii. Quarterbacks can toss or throw a lateral (bubble screen, swing pass, toss sweep) behind the line of scrimmage. Once the ball crosses the line of scrimmage, a player cannot lateral the ball.
 - iv. The offense may use multiple handoffs behind the line of scrimmage.
 - v. “Center Sneak” play is not allowed. The quarterback is not allowed to handoff to the center on the first handoff of the play.
 - vi. Any player who receives a handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
 - vii. Once the ball has been handed off, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
 - viii. Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding.
 - ix. Spinning/Jump Cuts are allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a flag pull.
 - 1. Players spinning out of control will be called for flag guarding.
 - x. No blocking or “screening” is allowed at any time.
 - xi. Offensive players in close proximity of the ball-carrier cannot interfere with the defensive player’s ability to pull the ball-carriers flag downfield.
 - xii. Flag obstruction – All jerseys MUST be tucked in before play begins. The flags must be on the player’s hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.

- xiii. There will NOT be a “no run” zone at midfield or before the end zone. Downhill running is prohibited and will be enforced as a penalty at the referee’s discretion.
- i. Passing
 - i. All passes must be thrown with one hand from behind the line of scrimmage.
 - ii. The quarterback may throw the ball away to avoid a sack. If the pass is thrown away, the ball must go beyond the line of scrimmage.
 - iii. Shovel passes are allowed.
 - iv. The quarterback has a seven-second “pass clock.” If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, the play is dead, the down is consumed and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off, the seven-second rule is no longer in effect.
 - 1. If the quarterback is standing in the end zone at the end of the seven-second clock, the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage.
- j. Receiving
 - i. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
 - ii. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. All motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted toward the line of scrimmage.
 - iii. A reception requires at least one foot or other body part to be in bounds while possessing the ball.
 - iv. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
 - v. Interceptions are returnable on Point After Touchdown (PAT) attempts and worth two points.
- k. Rushing the Passer
 - i. 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 can defend on the line of scrimmage.
 - ii. Once the ball is handed off, the seven-yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may cross the line of scrimmage.
 - iii. 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.
 - 1. A legal rush is:
 - a. Any rush from a point 7-yards from the defensive line of scrimmage.
 - b. A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off by the quarterback.
 - 2. A penalty may be called if:
 - a. The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap and crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff or pass – Illegal rush (5 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down)
 - b. Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped – Off sides (5 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down)

- c. Any defensive player not lined up at the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed or handed off – Illegal rush (5 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down)
 - d. If the offense draws the rusher(s) to jump the seven-yard marker prior to the snap of the ball, that rusher(s) CANNOT rush during that play. However, any other defender that is seven yards back may rush instead. Jumping the rush is not a penalty until the rusher crosses the line of scrimmage prior to the handoff or passed ball.
 - e. Special Circumstances:
 - i. Teams are not required to rush the quarterback with the seven second clock in effect
 - ii. Teams are not required to identify their rushers before the play.
 - iv. Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however, contact with the quarterback, unless ruled incidental by the official, would result in a roughing the passer penalty.
 - v. 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. The PATH is set pre-snap from the rusher or rushers directly to the quarterback. PATH does not move once the quarterback moves. 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.**
 - vi. A sack occurs if the quarterback’s flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball will be spotted where possession of the ball is once the flag is pulled.
 - 1. A Safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team’s end zone.
- I. Flag Pulling
 - i. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball-carrier is in full possession of the ball.
 - ii. Defenders can dive to pull flags but cannot tackle, hold or run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.
 - iii. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball-carrier possession at any time.
 - iv. If a player’s flag inadvertently falls off during a play while that player has possession, the player is down immediately and the play ends. The ball is placed where the flag lands.
 - v. If a player who has one or no flags in their belt takes possession of the ball, the play is dead at that spot on the field.
 - vi. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is no in possession of the ball.
 - vii. 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.
- m. Formations

- i. Offenses must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage (the center) and up to four players on the line of scrimmage. The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.
 - 1. Teams may shift formations prior to the snap as long as they are set for at least one second before the ball is snapped.
 - 2. One player at a time may go in motion at least one yard behind the line of scrimmage.
 - ii. Movement by a player who is set or a player who runs toward the line of scrimmage while in motion is considered a false start.
 - iii. The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between his/her legs to a player in the backfield, and the ball must completely leave his/her hands.
- n. Unsportsmanlike Conduct
- i. If the field monitor or referee witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the referee's discretion. No appeals will be considered. **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!**
 - ii. Offensive or confrontational language is not allowed. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.
 - iii. Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach or official.
 - iv. Ball-carriers **MUST** make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.
 - v. Defenders must give free releases off the line of scrimmage to offensive players and are not allowed to run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags. **ROUGH PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED**
 - vi. Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship as well:
 - 1. Yell to cheer on your players, not to harass officials or other teams.
 - 2. Keep comments clean and profanity free.
 - 3. Compliment ALL players, not just one child or team.
 - vii. Unsportsmanlike conduct penalties:
 - 1. On Defense: +10 yards and automatic first down
 - 2. On Offense: -10 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
- o. Penalties
- i. General
 - 1. The referee will call all penalties.
 - 2. Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
 - 3. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, exception as noted (spot fouls).
 - 4. Only the team captain or head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players may not question calls.
 - 5. Games or halves may not end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.

6. Penalties are assessed live ball then dead ball. Live ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered complete.

7. Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.

ii. Defensive spot fouls

Defensive Pass Interference	Automatic first down
Holding	+5 yards and automatic first down
Stripping	+10 yards and automatic first down

iii. Offensive spot fouls

Screening, blocking or running with the ball	-10 yards and loss of down
Charging	-10 yards and loss of down
Flag guarding	-10 yards and loss of down

iv. Defensive penalties

Defensive unnecessary roughness	+10 yards and automatic first down
Defensive unsportsmanlike conduct	+10 yards and automatic first down
Offside	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Illegal rush	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Illegal flag pull	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Roughing the passer	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Taunting	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down

v. Offensive penalties

Offensive unnecessary roughness	-10 yards and loss of down
Offensive unsportsmanlike conduct	-10 yards and loss of down
Offside/false start	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal forward pass	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Offensive pass interference	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal motion	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Delay of game	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Impeding the rusher	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal procedure	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down

❖ For any rules not addressed here, refer to the NFL Flag football rule book.