

# Flag Football Information & Rule Book 2018



## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of The Community House Flag Football Program is to provide young players with an opportunity to participate in athletics in an environment that is fun as well as educational. It is our philosophy that balanced athletic competition in a team environment promotes sportsmanship, cooperation, leadership skills, and the benefits of exercise and hard work. These are attributes that are displayed not only by elite athletes, but also by good students, conscientious citizens, and successful professionals. These rules are not intended to intensify the competitive nature of our games, but to improve the quality of play and provide each team and player with every chance of success.

## **2. ROSTERS**

Players may be added to a roster until the beginning of their second game. All player additions/transfers must be first cleared through the league director and the coach of that team. **Illegal players (via protest procedures) will result in a forfeit by the offending team.** The team manager may be held responsible and miss the following game. League management reserves the right to modify this rule based on teams depleted by injuries or unforeseen circumstances.

## **3. Equipment**

Every player must wear flags supplied by The League. No alternative game flags will be allowed. Each team must wear team jerseys with numbers. **Each player must have a mouth piece to be eligible to play.** Team jerseys or clothing must not, in any way, alter the defensive's team's ability to remove the flags. No pads, dangerous equipment or apparel will be allowed. **Soft, rounded spikes allowed for outdoor play. No metal spikes. No pants/shorts with zippers. Tuck in shirts. No pockets.** The home team shall wear the dark colored jersey; visiting team shall wear light colored jersey.

1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> / Grade

Football size: **Pee-Wee Size**

Field size: **60 yards**

3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> / 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

Football size: **Junior Size**

Field size: 100 yards

7<sup>th</sup> / 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

Football size: **Wilson TDY**

Field size: **60 yards**



## **4. OFFICIALS**

1<sup>st</sup> / 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade: 1 official

3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> / 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Grade: 2 officials

7<sup>th</sup> / 8<sup>th</sup> Grade: 1 official

## **5. GAME FORMAT**

**1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade:** 2-20 minute Halves with a running clock. Stoppages will occur only for timeouts, after an extra point, injuries and the last two minutes of **each half (incomplete pass, out of bounds, penalty, etc.) At the half way point of each half, there will be a 1-minute timeout for subs.**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Thru 6th Grade:** 2-20 minute Halves with a running clock. Stoppages will occur only for timeouts, after an extra point, injuries and the last two minutes of **each half (incomplete pass, out of bounds, penalty, etc.)**

*Time permitting: there will be a five-minute break between halves.*

## **6. BEGINNING THE GAME**

- The first possession will be determined by a coin flip by the officials at mid-field with the team captains prior to the start of the game.
- The **HOME** team shall call heads or tails. The teams that wins the toss decides if they will receive the kickoff to start the game or to start the second half. The team that receives to start the game shall kickoff the second half of the game. The kicking team shall decide which direction they will defend at the start of each half.

## **7. Mouth Guards**

**\*\*\*Mouth guards are to worn at all times during games, no exceptions.**

1. A player who does not have a mouth guard during the game will have a flag thrown.
  - i. This will result in a fifteen yard penalty and a loss of a down or if the defense is penalized with this infraction they will receive a fifteen yard penalty and the offense will get an automatic first down.
  - ii. The player will be asked to leave the field till he/she has their mouth guard. (They may return to play once they have the mouth guard)

*\*\*Coaches, this rule will be enforced the first week of the season. Please note: This rule has been put into place for the safety of the children and all who participate in the league.*

## **8. Practices**

Practice times are up to the coaches. It is also up to the coaches to find a practice area for your team to hold their practice each week. The Community House suggests using local parks, schools and/or Katherine Legge Park, if using Robbins park, please take care to not damage game fields.

You are allowed to practice up to 2 times a week until opening game. After opening game you are only allowed one practice per week.

## **9. GAME SCORING**

- Six (6) points for a touchdown.
- Two (2) points for a passing/running extra point conversion from the **7 yard line** (see rule 23)
- **One (1) point for an extra point from the 3 yard line, passing ONLY, no run plays allowed.\*** (see rule 23)

- If an extra point is intercepted it may be returned to the opposite end zone for one (1) or two (2) points for the defensive team (depending which point was being attempted)
- If the offense commits a penalty, the attempt is disqualified.
- Two (2) points for a safety (the offense then receives the ball again).

## **10. Time Outs**

- All teams in all divisions will have **2** (30) thirty second timeouts per half (**do not carry over**)
- Official timeouts will be at the referees' discretion

## **11. Overtime**

No OT for regular season games except 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders. A game ending with equal score at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half shall be recorded as a tie. See section 30 for playoff OT procedure.

## **12. NUMBER OF PLAYERS**

- Each team will consist of approximately 10-13 players assigned to one team.
- Each team shall start the game with 8 players. A minimum of 5 legally rostered players must be present at game time in order to avoid a forfeit.

## **13. Playing time for Players**

- All players are required to get equal playing time.
- All players are encouraged to play every position on the field at least once throughout the season. The only exception to this rule is if a child is not attending weekly practice.

## **14. Player Positions**

- **OFFENSE: 8 Players, 3 required on the LOS**
  - 1 Quarterback
  - **3 Linemen**
    - 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>: division: A play begins with the QB, holding the ball, no more than 5 yards behind the center, calls READY, SET, HIKE. There are no substitutions or changes to this cadence. The QB may not call "on-two" or any other variation.
    - 3<sup>rd</sup>&4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup>&6<sup>th</sup>: division: Play begins when the center snaps the ball to the quarterback. A mishandled or fumbled snap is a dead ball at the spot the ball lands. The center may snap between the legs or sideways.
    - The **3 linemen** must line-up within one arms length of each other
    - All players are eligible to receive a pass at any time.
    - **Blocking linemen can use open hand blocking from the waist to shoulders.**
    - **Blocking linemen ARE ALLOWED to extend their arms to block.**

### ○ 5 Remaining Players

- The remaining **5** offensive players may line up in any formation. These players can be receivers, running backs or QB.
  - There **doesn't** have to be a running back in the backfield.

### • DEFENSE: 8 Players

- **3 linemen must line-up within the width of the three offensive linemen on the line of scrimmage. ONLY the three (3) down linemen may rush past the LOS. No blitzing LB or CB. The cornerback may only cross the LOS when an offensive player is outside the tackle box.**
  - **Defensive linemen must line up 2 yard from the line of scrimmage (this is intended to allow offensive plays to develop)**

## **15. BALL POSSESSION for 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Division**

**Setting:** 80 total yards = 60 yards of play 3 15- yard zones

3 first downs = 1 @ 15 yard line 1 @ 30 yard line 1 @ 15 yard line

### **Start of Game:**

- The ball then will start on the 7 yard mark in the direction of choice of deciding of coin toss outcome.
- Ball will remain in center of field the entire game.
- Each team will have 4 downs to make it to each first down mark on the field.
- If on your last attempt (3<sup>rd</sup> down) to make the first down and you fail. You may wish to either go for the first down (on your 4<sup>th</sup> down try) or you may “punt the ball”.
- **“Punt the Ball” is turning the ball over to your opponent without kicking.** This is done by the referee walking the ball down to the other end of the field and having the opposing team start their downs on their **10 yard line**.
- After half time, direction of play will change. This will be done by the referees

## **16. BALL POSSESSION for 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> grade and 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> grade divisions**

**Setting:** 120 total yards = 100 yards of play 2-10 yard end zones

First downs = 4 first downs= 1 @ each 20 yard line, 1 @ each 40 yard line,

- **Teams start with a kick off from the 40 yard line (after a safety- the offensive team would kick from the 30 yard line), there are no onside kicks at any time in any division. At no time can the kicking team recover a kicked ball from a kickoff—for punts and kickoffs, if the ball touches the receiving team and he bobbles/fumbles the ball and BEFORE the ball touches ground a member of the kicking team retains possession, the ball will be awarded to the kicking team.**
- The offense starts where the ball carrier has his/her flag pulled from the kick off.
- If an offensive team's drive stalls after 3 downs, they may elect to “punt” on fourth down.
- **If a team has no punters the offense may have the referee walk the 30 yards from the spot of the ball and the other team takes over. If a team chooses to physically punt, the punter has 5 seconds from receiving the ball to punt, or lose possession at the spot of the 4<sup>th</sup> down and both teams are still required to have the minimum of 4 players on the line of scrimmage.**

- When taking the 30, the furthest point back you could pin a team would be the 5 yard line. If a team is closer than the 35 yard line on fourth down, they must “go for it”, physically punt the ball or give possession to the other team on the 5 yard line (no closer).
- **Offensive team has thirty (30) seconds from the spot of the ball to snap the ball or it will be a delay of game.**
- *There is no extra point kicking or field goal attempts in any division.*

## **17. BALL ADVANCEMENT**

- Forward runs or passes are acceptable.
- **Pass receptions must be made with ONE FOOT landing in bounds.**
- If possession of the ball is lost simultaneously when the receiver hits the ground, it is not a reception.
- If a ball carrier's knee touches the ground, they shall be considered down at that point.
  - **No fumbles, the ball is dead where it hits the ground.** Forward fumbles will result in the ball being spotted where the carrier fumbled the ball, not forward of that point. **On 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade kickoffs and punts, the receiving team may allow the ball to hit the ground before fielding without the fumble rule being applied. It is the referee’s discretion when to call the ball dead to avoid contact amongst players. If any player on your team touches the ball and then it hit the ground, the ball is dead. If the ball bounces on the ground and in the referee’s discretion, the receiving team can field it without contact occurring, he will allow it. PLAY TO THE WHISTLE.**

## **18. SHIFTING/MOTION**

- **Only ONE offensive player may be shifting their position at the same time prior to the QB starting the play.**
- Their movement may be in any direction except towards the line of scrimmage

## **19. ENCROACHMENT/OFFSIDE /FALSE START**

- Encroachment will be called if defense passes over the plane of the L.O.S. and touches a player before the play begins. Offside will be called if any defensive players cross the L.O.S., this may or may not be a dead ball foul based on the referee’s discretion concerning the defensive players advantage or position when going offside.
- A false start will be called if an offensive player moves before the play begins.
- Advise your players to look at the referee to see if they are standing legally before the play begins. The referee will acknowledge and advise each player as to what they need to do to be “on-side.” Delay of game may still be called if offensive players are taking longer than allowed to be set.

## **20. DOWNING THE BALL CARRIER**

- Players must have possession of the ball before they can be legally de-flagged.
- **When a runner loses their flag in the open field it is the referee’s discretion whether or not the defense caused the flags to come off. If the referee deems the flags came off as a result of the defense, he will blow the whistle and call the play dead at that point. If the referee deems the defense did not cause the flags to come off, play continues and the de-flagging reverts to a one-hand touch anywhere on the player’s body. (Play until the whistle)**
- It is illegal for a defensive player to intentionally pull a flag from an offensive player who is not in possession of the ball. Tampering with the belt in any way to gain an advantage is considered unsportsmanlike.

- Diving in an attempt to remove a flag is legal as long as no contact is made.
- The ball carrier is not allowed to dive to gain yardage at any time. If in the judgment of the referee, contact results from a ball carrier diving, an unnecessary roughness penalty may be called.

## **21. LOSS OF BALL POSSESSION**

- Failure to make a first down.
- Interceptions may be returned.
- The team who threw the interception may try to de-flag the ball carrier. ALL FUMBLES ARE CONSIDERED A DEAD BALL AS SOON AS THEY LEAVE POSSESSION OF THE BALL CARRIERS HANDS.
  - Fumbled balls will be spotted where it hits the ground. If an official believes a ball was fumbled forward on purpose, the official may spot the ball where the ball left possession of the ball carrier.
    - If a ball is fumbled in the end zone behind the offensive team, this will be considered a safety.

## **22. Intentional Penalties**

If the offense/defense commits an "intentional" penalty in the last two minutes of a game that is 10 points or less at the time, this may be penalized as an intentional unsportsmanlike conduct and called at the discretion of the official. If an "intentional" penalty is called, penalty is loss of down (offense only) and clock does not stop.

## **23. 1 yard QB sneak rule / 3 Yard End-Zone Run Rule**

- If your offense is 1 yard or less from a first down, the QB may not run the ball for a first down between the tackles (or any tight formation). Penalty is 5 yards. Running is permissible, but must be outside tackles.
- The offense must pass the ball if they are on or closer to the goal line than the 3 yard line. Teams do not have the option to run; a legal forward pass must be completed to score from this position on the field.

## **24. Mercy Rule**

- After one team is winning by twenty eight points or more, the losing team gets one offensive series to continue regulation play. If they do not score, the game goes into scrimmage mode playing up to the fifteen minute mark in the second half if time allows. After the fifteen minute mark, the game is over.

## **25. Taunting/Trash Talking**

- No trash talking or taunting of opponents and/or referees either on the field or from the sidelines. This will result in a 15-yard penalty and a team warning. The next offense will again be 15-yard penalty and a loss of a down. The third offense will result in an automatic forfeit for offending team.
- This applies to fans as well. Referees can penalize a team for remarks from the sideline. This means players or fans. Any fan that makes remarks to the field will be asked to leave the premises.
- The League reserves the right to suspend or banish a player(s) and/or coach for verbal abuse and/or misconduct.

## **26. Begging a Call**

During a play, if a possible infraction occurs and players or coaches from either team, either on the field or sidelines begin yelling out (Begging a Call), a penalty of 10 yards can be tacked onto the end of the play. This penalty will be marked off as a dead ball foul even if it occurred while play was in progress.

## **27. PENALTIES**

### **15 YARD INFRACTIONS**

- Unnecessary roughness
- Unsportsmanlike conduct
- Tackling & clipping
- Deliberately running into an opposing player or diving into another player
- Contact with an official
- Trash talking/Taunting
- Roughing the passer

#### **10 YARD INFRACTIONS**

- Holding (defensive and offensive)
- Illegal Contact
- Tripping, and stiff-arming
- Offensive pass interference
- Stripping the ball
- Hurdling
- Spiking the football

#### **5 YARD INFRACTIONS**

- Obstructing the runner by holding, grasping, or obstructing the forward motion of a runner while attempting to de-flag them.
- Off sides
- Illegal blitz
- Flag guarding
- Illegal formation
- Illegal motion
- Begging a call
- Calling an additional time-out
- Intentional grounding
- False start
- 1 yard QB rule
- Delay of game

#### **28. OTHER PENALTIES/ISSUES**

- Defensive pass interference results in ball being placed at the spot of the foul and automatic first down.

- If a player is bleeding, they must leave the field of play and stop the bleeding or bandage it up and then report to the official for clearance to resume play. (First Aid WILL BE PROVIDED BY LEAGUE; however it is also the responsibility of each team to provide their own first aid kit).
- The clock has to stop for an injury and the child must leave the field for one play.

## **29. OFFICIAL'S AUTHORITY**

The officials' have the authority to rule on any situation not specifically covered in this rule book. His/her discretion is FINAL. The officials have the right to eject players or have them sit out part or all of the game. Fans, coaches and spectators are considered part of the team and any fouls they commit will result in a penalty against their team. Any player ejected from a game for any reason must immediately leave the field and their bench. If the ejected player does not leave the park in two (2) minutes, the game will be declared a forfeit and the offending team will receive a loss and the opposing team will receive a win.

## **30. Playoff/Championships**

3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> graders-If a game ends in a tie score at the end of regulation, overtime will take place immediately after. The team who started with the ball at the beginning of the game will also start on offense in overtime. The offensive team starts on the 15 yard line to complete 4 downs and score a TD. If they achieve a TD, they get one attempt for a PAT. (See below) After their success or failure, their opponent starts at the same 15 yard line on offense and gets the same chance.

PAT: Extra points: A team may decide to go for 1 point from the 2.5yard line from the end zone or 2 points from the 5 yard line from the end zone

\***Note**-if the defense intercepts the ball, they may return to the opposite end zone for a TD. If the defense intercepts a conversion it may be returned to the opposite end zone for two (2) points. This will continue until we have a winner .  
**There are no time-outs in overtime play.**

**There is no overtime in regular season games except for 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade.**

## **31. Bad Weather**

- Games will be cancelled if there is lightning, thunder or hard rain. If there is light rain or sprinkles games will go forward that day. **Thorguard Lightning Detection System.**
- The Flag Football website will have the most up to date info on field conditions and rain cancellations.

## **32. Website**

Coaches, players, and parents are encouraged to view the website on a regular basis. Information will be posted as they come available throughout the season.

## **33. Coaches on Field**

1<sup>st</sup> & 2nd grade teams may have **two** coaches on the field for offense & defense at any time during the game.

3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade teams may have **one** coach on the field for offense & defense at any time during the game.

7<sup>th</sup> & 8th grade teams may have **one** coach on the field for offense only.

## **34. FINAL NOTES FOR COACHES**

**\*This is a recreational league. All players are to have equal playing time regardless of abilities, size, or athleticism.**

**\*\*\*All other rules not covered in this book, please see IHSA football rules.**