

# NJAYF Flag Football Rules 2013

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## 1. Introduction:

- a. First, as coaches and volunteers we have to remember that at this age group, our players are ages 5 and 6 and the game is about instructing the players about the BASIC fundamentals of football and having FUN. No scores are to be kept. We want the parents and the players to be respectful to the opposing team (including their parents and coaches). We want to emphasize to the players, coaches and parents good sportsmanship type of behavior.
- b. Each town decides who, when and where they play. The games and/or the game times are NOT determined by JSAYF.

## 2. Playing Field:

- a. The field is to be divided as follows:
  - i. The field is to be split down the middle goal post to goal post. The reason why the field is split down the middle is so that two (2) games can be played at the same time.
    1. The two (2) fields should be separated with cones.
  - ii. Once the field is split, the field that is to be used is an 80-yard field with two 10-yard end zones.
- b. After each play, the ball goes to the center hash mark on the field (center of the playing field).
- c. At the start of the game, at the half and after a touch down is scored, the ball is placed at the 30-yard line from the opposing end zone.
- d. There is no punting. As such, if a punt is declared on 4<sup>th</sup> down, then the ball goes to the 30-yard line from the opposing end zone. Or in the alternative, if a team is on their own goal line and does not make the first down, the ball goes to the 30-yard line from the opposing end zone.

### 3. Football Equipment:

- a. The players must wear the following equipment (mandatory):
  - i. Athletic protector; and
  - ii. Mouthpiece.
    1. The mouthpiece cannot be clear or white.
- b. Cleats should be worn, but are optional.
- c. The players are **NOT** permitted to wear any type of pads.
  - i. No knee pads;
  - ii. No thigh pads;
  - iii. No hip pads;
  - iv. No arm pads;
  - v. No shoulder pads; and
  - vi. **NO PADS OF ANY KIND!**
- d. Jerseys **MUST** be tucked in and are not permitted to cover the flags.
- e. Flags:
  - i. The color of the flags worn **MUST** be in contrast to the uniform color;
    1. The flags cannot be made from a clear material.
  - ii. The flags should be between a length of 14"-20" and a minimum of 2" wide;
  - iii. The flags cannot be tied to the belt and/or other parts of the uniform;
    1. Note that when the flags and belts are new, need to check that the flags are not secured to the belts. The flags may be affixed for shipping purposes. Make sure that the flags come off!
  - iv. The ends of the flags cannot be tucked into any part of the players uniform; and
  - v. The ends of the flags cannot be cut on a 45-degree angle.

### 4. Referees:

- a. The Home Team must supply two (2) referees. The referees must be over the age of 16 years old. In order to avoid conflicts, it is extremely important that the referees know the rules.

## 5. Rules of the Game:

- a. Coaches on the field:
  - i. Two (2) Coaches from each team are permitted on the field during the game.
  - ii. While on defense, the Coaches should be lined up as follows:
    - 1. One (1) coach behind the safety; and
    - 2. One (1) coach watching the line.
  - iii. While on offense, the Coaches should be lined up as follows:
    - 1. One (1) coach behind the backs; and
    - 2. One (1) coach watching the line.
  - iv. Coaches should discuss the rules with the coaches from the opposing team prior to the beginning of the game.
  - v. Coaches should always act in a positive manner. (Yelling or belittling the children is unacceptable).
  - vi. A Coach may not direct a player while the play is in motion. That is, once the players leave the huddle, the coach may not reengage the players until after the play is over.
  
- b. Game Duration:
  - i. The game duration of play is one hour (60 minutes).
    - 1. Note that if your team has a playbook to be aware that there is a time limit and the more time spent in the huddle/going over a playbook the less time the kids will have to play the game. Learning plays should be done at practice and NOT during the game. Please try to maintain the game time at a steady pass so the kids get as much play time as possible.
  - ii. Two 25-minute halves with a running clock.
  - iii. Ten (10) minutes between halves.
    - 1. Half time is for the flag cheerleaders.
  - iv. Each team will be permitted one (1) time out per half.
  - v. Thirty (30) seconds will be allowed between plays.
  - vi. Try to have the games start on time, as these games are typically the first games to be played. If they run over, then it will affect the rest of the games for the remainder of the day.
  
- c. Interior Line:
  - i. That is, on offense, the center and the two (2) guards and on defense, the defensive players lined up over the guards, **MUST** make contact.
  - ii. Blocking:
    - 1. A blocker cannot use his/her hands. Blocking shall be done with the arms and body in the form of shoulder and brush blocking **ONLY**.

- d. Players:
  - i. Each team shall have a maximum of 24 players and a minimum of 10 players.
  - ii. \*Mandatory Play Rule\*
    - 1. **All players will play a minimum of twelve (12) plays.**
  - iii. No one player is to play QB the whole game or running back, Each player on the roster must play QB and running at least one play each game.

- e. Defense:
  - ii. The defensive line will consist of four (4) players.
    - 1. Two (2) players lined up on offensive guards.
    - 2. Two (2) players lined up on offensive ends/tackles.
  - ii. No one lined up over the center.

The defense team may choose any formation. The defense can have the four (4) remaining players positioned at linebacker or safety. These four (4) players must be at least five (5) yards off the line of scrimmage.

- iii. Everyone wears a flag except for two (2) interior linemen.
- iv. The two (2) interior defensive linemen are the only ones that can rush the quarterback. **LINED UP HEAD ON HEAD AND NO SHOOTING GAPS!** They must make contact with the offensive lineman (guards), which means that these players cannot shoot the gap!
  - 1. Note that the defensive players may only engage the QB or Back when either is outside of the tackle or past the line of scrimmage. That is, if the QB or Back stays in the pocket the defensive player may not remove the flag until either goes outside of the tackle or past the line of scrimmage. We want to allow the play to get started.
- v. No goal line defense is allowed. The players must line-up in there normal positions even on the goal line.

- f. Offense:
  - i. No unbalanced line.
  - ii. The offense team must have five (5) players on the line and thee (3) in the backfield.
  - iii. One (1) fumbled snap per four (4) downs. This means that on the first fumble, this counts as a play. A fumble is one where the player drops the ball and hits the ground and the ball is not recovered in a continuous manner. Any fumbles after this point, do not count as one (1) of the four (4) plays.
    - 1. Note that if the player fumbles the ball but recovers it in a continuous motion then the play should be allowed to continue. This is based upon not wanting to continually stop the game. We want the players to play as much as they can.
  - iv. Three (3) interior linemen (center and two (2) guards) are not eligible to carry and/or receive the ball.
  - v. The center is the only player on the field permitted to be in a three (3)-point stance.

- vi. If a team is ahead by three (3) touchdowns, or has scored three (3) times the other team maintains possession of the ball until they score.
  - vii. Interceptions cannot be advanced. Once the ball is intercepted, change of possession is at point of interception and the other team is now on offensive.
  - viii. The offense cannot go on silent snap count.
  - ix. There will be no quarter back sneaks or quarterback keepers, The QB must hand the ball off or pass it.
  - x. No flag guarding or stiff-arming allowed at the flag level.
- g. Field Participants:
- i. Unless a participant has had a background check, they are not permitted on the field.
  - ii. No parents are permitted, unless authorized, to be on the field during the game.
  - iii. The free substitution rule is always in effect and a player may enter the game ANYTIME the ball is dead.

**Remember this is not about winning and losing this is to have fun for the kids.  
These kids are the future of your program**