

Rappahannock River Youth Football League

2018

Flag Football Rules

DIVISIONS

- Pee Wee teams shall be composed of players 5&6 years of age

PLAYERS

- Teams shall field (7) players on offense and defense during games.

COACHES

- Only (1) coach shall be permitted on the field (offense and defense).

UNIFORM & EQUIPMENT

- Players shall wear Uniform with color that will identify their affiliation with their respective locality. Other form of uniform will not be permitted.
- Players shall wear flag belts, which shall have at least two attached flags.
- Players shall ensure that their shirts are tucked-in so that the flags can be easily seen and pulled by the opposing defense.
- Players shall wear a mouthpiece while on the field of play.
- Players shall wear cleats (no metal) or tennis/basketball shoes (no sandals, boots, dress shoes, etc.)
- No jewelry or hats of any kind shall be allowed on the field of play.
- No casts of any material shall be allowed on the field of play.
- The Nike "Pee Wee" is the required/permitted football.

GENERAL RULES

- There shall be no kick-offs, extra-point kicks, or punts.
- The field of play shall be 60 yards in length, containing two 20-yard zones with two 10-yard end zones.
- Players receiving the snap shall be "under center" or at any distance behind the line of scrimmage. (The first player to receive the snap from the center shall be considered the QB.)
- QB is permitted to run after the ball is first handed off to a teammate or if the ball is received out of a "shot gun" formation.
- Snaps may be made between the legs or from the side.
- All snaps shall start from the ground and be of a quick, continuous motion.
- Offensive possessions shall begin on the 3-yard line (except for a change of possession).

- A new series of downs (four downs) shall be awarded when the offensive team moves the ball past the 20-yard line and into the next zone. Once inside the 20-yard line, the offensive team has four downs to score.
- If the offensive team advances the ball past the 20-yard line for an apparent first down, but a dead-ball penalty is enforced at the end of the play that moves the ball back across the 20-yard line, the offensive team will retain the first down (but lose yardage).
- If the offensive team advances the ball past the 20-yard line for an apparent first down, but a non-dead-ball penalty is enforced that moves the ball back across the 20-yard line, the offensive team shall not retain the first down. (If this occurs on a fourth down play, the result will be a turnover on downs.)
- If the offensive team fails to achieve a first down, the opposing team shall take possession (i.e. turnover on downs) at their own three-yard line.
- After achieving a first down, if the offensive team fails to score in four downs, the opposing team shall take possession (i.e. turnover on downs) at their own three-yard line.
- Interceptions may be advanced from the end zone. (If “downed” in the end zone, the intercepting team shall begin their offensive possession at the 3-yard line.)
- The defensive team may rush/blitz, provided the rushing/blitzing players are at least seven yards from the line of scrimmage at the snap of the ball. (The seven yards will be marked-off by the official.)
- Running and passing plays shall be permitted.
- Teams are required to have at least four players on the line of scrimmage at that start of each play.
- No player, substitute, coach or others subject to the rules shall use disconcerting words or phrases, or commit any act not in accordance with the spirit of fair play for the purpose of confusing the opponent.

SCORING

- A TOUCHDOWN is 6 points
- A SAFETY is 2 points
- A successful PAT (from the 3 yard-line) is 1 point
- A successful PAT (from the 10 yard-line) is 2 points

GAME - REGULATION

- The time shall be kept of the field by the head official. (Updates shall be continuously provided.)
- The game shall consist (4) 8 minutes running clock quarters, with a 5-minute half-time. The clock shall stop only during appropriate dead ball situations (touchdowns, penalties, safeties, touchbacks, time outs, injuries, out of bounds, and incomplete pass. Teams may also intentionally “spike” the ball to stop the clock.
- The offense shall have 25 seconds to snap the ball from the time the ball is set by the officials.
- A team shall have two time-outs per half – 30 seconds in length.

GAME - OVERTIME

- If two teams should have a tie score at the end of regulation, an overtime period shall be played.
- Prior to the overtime starting, a captain’s meeting shall be held, a coin toss shall determine possession of the ball, and each team shall get four plays from the 10-yard line to score.
- During the first overtime, teams may attempt a one, two, or three point conversion.

- During the second overtime (and beyond), teams shall be required to attempt at least a two-point conversion.
- If the defense intercepts a pass and returns it for a touchdown, the intercepting team shall win the game.
- Overtime shall consist of each team have equal amount of possessions. If a winner is not determined after 2 possessions that game will be recorded as a tie.
- Each team shall get one additional 30-second time-out in each overtime period.

MERCY RULE

- Teams have no mercy rule, however coaches are required to exercise good judgment and demonstrate an appropriate level of sportsmanship to ensure that there is no appearance of purposeful humiliation.

BLOCKING

- Players may “block” (i.e., screen, pick, shield) downfield only, but the “blocking” shall be free of purposeful contact. (The center, or any other offensive players, are NOT permitted to “block” for the QB.)
- Any use of the hands, arms, elbows, legs, or body to initiate contact during an offensive block shall be penalized.
- A player shall be on his feet before, during, and after screen blocking.
- There shall be NO charging into offensive blockers; the defense shall make an effort to get around the offensive blocker.

HURDLING

- No hurdling of another player is permitted. (Offensive players are permitted to jump in stride to make the pulling of flags more difficult, provided that they jump in stride and not leap over a defensive player.)
- Hurdling is defined as an attempt by a player to jump with one or both feet or knees foremost over an opponent.
- A receiver may dive to catch a ball and a defensive player may dive in an attempt to remove a flag.

FUMBLES & INTERCEPTIONS

- Any fumble or forward pass that is intercepted or caught in the air may be advanced.
- Any time the ball touches the ground during a play from scrimmage, the play shall become “dead” and the ball shall be spotted at the point where the ball made contact with the ground.
- Balls may be fumbled backwards for a loss, but not forward for a touchdown or a first down. (An offensive player who fumbles the ball forward into the end-zone shall result in a turnover and the defensive team will take possession at the 3-yard line.)
- A ball that is fumbled forward for an apparent first down will be spotted one yard short of the first down.
- A ball that is fumbled backwards into the end zone shall result in a safety being awarded to the opposing team.

RUNNING

- Teams shall be permitted to execute running and passing plays.
- Once a running play is executed (i.e. a running back takes possession), defenders shall be permitted to rush across the line of scrimmage, even if they were not at least seven yards from the line of scrimmage at the start of the play.
- There shall be no “power” running; ball-carriers shall not initiate contact, but shall seek to evade defenders.
- No running plays shall be permitted between the 15-yard line and 20 yard-line, and between the 5-yard line and the goal line (i.e. special “no run” zones).

PASSING & RECEIVING

- All forward passes (including the oft-used shovel pass) must be thrown “noticeably” beyond the line of scrimmage; else a penalty shall be assessed.
- All players shall be eligible to receive a forward pass.
- Only one legal forward pass shall be permitted per play.
- Once a lateral is made behind the line of scrimmage, defenders shall be permitted to rush across the line of scrimmage, even if they were not at least seven yards from the line of scrimmage at the start of the play.
- Receivers shall have one foot in bounds while “in possession” of the ball for it to be considered a legal catch.

MOTION

- Before the ball is snapped, only one offensive player shall be in motion.
- If multiple players “shift”, they must be set for one full second before the snap of the ball or before another player goes in motion (and stays in motion at the snap of the ball).
- A player’s motion shall not be toward the line of scrimmage at the snap of the ball.
- A player in motion towards the line of scrimmage at the snap of the ball shall result in a penalty.
- All offensive players (except the player in motion) shall be stationary in their positions for at least one full second before the snap.

FLAG - GUARDING

- Offensive players shall not flag-guard by using their hands, arms, or the ball to deny the opportunity for an opponent to remove the flag.
- If an offensive player flag-guards, the play shall be blown dead and a penalty assessed from the spot of the infraction.

LATERALS

- Laterals may be executed beyond the line of scrimmage and on interception returns.
- Once a lateral is executed behind the line of scrimmage, defenders are permitted to pass rush across the line of scrimmage, even if they were not at least seven yards from the line of scrimmage at the start of the play.

BLITZING/RUSHING

- All blitzers/rushers shall be at least seven yards off the line of scrimmage at the start of the play.

- Any player who blitzes/rushes (AND crosses the line of scrimmage before a pass is thrown), who is less than seven yards from the line of scrimmage at the snap off the ball, shall be assessed an "Illegal Blitz" penalty.

SECURING THE FLAG

- A defensive player shall not tackle, block, trip or hold the ball carrier while attempting to de-flag the ball carrier.
- Intentionally pulling the flag of an offensive player without that offensive player having possession of the ball shall be considered illegal.
- If an offensive player (in possession of the ball) loses his flag prior to being de-flagged, the play shall become "dead" and the ball spotted at the point where the flag was lost.
- If an offensive player loses his flag prior to gaining possession of the ball, the play shall become "dead" and the ball spotted at the point where possession of the ball was gained.
- It shall not be considered a penalty if in the midst of a play an offensive player's shirt becomes untucked and/or his flags are forced from their original location.
- When a flag has been successfully pulled, the ball will be spotted at the SPOT of the pull. It will not be spotted where the ball may have been held at the time of the pull. (If a player's flag has been pulled in the end zone but the ball has not crossed into the end zone, the ball shall be spotted at one-foot line.)

STEALING THE BALL

- No opponent shall attempt to strip (steal) the ball from the ball carrier. If this occurs successfully, the play shall be considered dead and a "stealing" penalty enforced from the spot of the infraction.
- If an attempt to steal the ball is unsuccessful, a "stealing" penalty shall be enforced from the end of the play.
- Stealing shall not be confused with a fumble that may be caught in the air and advanced.

PENALTIES

- Every offensive penalty will result in a loss of down, in addition to assessed yardage.
- Any player or coach ejected shall receive a mandatory, minimum one week suspension (practices and games).

Game Forfeiture (Examples: Team fails to show, or is more than 10-minutes late for a scheduled game, Team receives excessive Unsportsmanlike Conduct penalty citations, or attempts to start/continue a game with less than five (5) players)

Unsportsmanlike Conduct (Examples: Player/coach being verbally/physically confrontational, taunting, slamming the ball to the ground, cursing, kicking the ball)

- 10-yards, assessed from line of scrimmage
- When the offense is cited, also results in a loss of down
- When the defense is cited, offense also awarded automatic first down
- May result in the ejection of the offending player and/or coach if cited twice
- Excessive citations may result in a game forfeiture for the offending team
- Any expulsion resulting from misconduct carries with it an automatic one game suspension

Delay of Game (Offensive team failing to snap the ball 25 seconds after the ball has been officially set)

- 5-yards (& loss of down, if committed by the offense), assessed from line of scrimmage

Illegal Formation (Less than four offensive players on the line of scrimmage at the snap of the ball)

- 5-yards & loss of down, assessed from line of scrimmage

False Start/Illegal Motion (Offensive player moving or in forward motion at the snap of the ball)

- 5-yards & loss of down, assessed from line of scrimmage

Illegal Run (Teams running in the “no-run” zones, QBs running without another player first taking possession of the football)

- 5-yards & loss of down, assessed from line of scrimmage

Power Run (Offensive player initiating physical contact during a run)

- 5-yards & loss of down, assessed from line of scrimmage

Illegal Forward Pass (Offensive team executing two or more forward passes on one play, a QB throwing a forward pass beyond the line of scrimmage, or a forward pass completed behind the line of scrimmage)

- 5-yards & loss of down, assessed from line of scrimmage

Offensive Pass Interference (Offensive player physically separating himself from a defensive player)

- 5-yards & loss of down, assessed from line of scrimmage

Illegal Blocking (Offensive player physically initiating contact in an attempt to block the defense)

- 5-yards & loss of down, assessed from the spot of the foul

Flag Guarding (Offensive player using arms/hands to prevent the pulling of his flag)

- 5-yards & loss of down, assessed from the spot of the foul

Flag Obstruction (Offensive player’s jersey/shirt obscuring flags during a play, preventing a pull)

- 5-yards & loss of down, assessed from the spot of the foul

Hurdling/Diving (Offensive player jumping/diving over a defensive player or diving for a first down or touchdown)

- 5-yards & loss of down, assessed from the spot of the foul

Offsides (Defensive player crosses line of scrimmage before the snap of the ball)

- Option - Offense awarded 5-yards from the line of scrimmage, replays the down
- Option - Offense accepts result of the play

Defensive Holding (Defensive player holds a receiver)

- Option - Offense awarded 5-yards from the line of scrimmage and an automatic first down
- Option - Offense accepts result of the play

Defensive Pass Interference (Defensive player physically obstructing a receiver from a forward pass)

- Option - Offense awarded automatic first down and ball marked at the spot of the foul

- Option - Offense accepts result of the play

Defensive Obstruction (Defensive player tackling/holding offensive player in an effort to pull a flag)

- Offense awarded an automatic first down and ball marked at the spot of the foul

Tackling (Defensive player tackling an offensive player, judged to be intentional)

- Offense awarded an automatic first down and ball marked at the spot of the foul
- Offense awarded an automatic first down if (and ball spot at the opposing team's 19-yard line) if infraction occurs between the 15-20-yard lines
- Offense awarded an automatic score (touchdown or conversion) if infraction occurs between the 5-yard line and goal line
- Offense may be awarded an automatic score (touchdown or conversion) at any point on the field if the last defender is judged to have purposefully tackled the ball-carrier

Roughing (Defensive player attempting to block a pass makes contact with the QB during the attempt)

- Option - Offense awarded 5-yards and replay of the down
- Option - Offense accepts result of the play

Stealing/Stripping (Defensive player attempting to physically wrestle the ball from the offensive player or swipes the ball from the QB's hands while the QB still has possession)

- Option - Offense awarded a replay of the down and five yards from the spot of the foul
- Option - Offense accepts result of the play

Illegal Cadence (Defensive player simulating the cadence of the QB in an attempt to create havoc)

- Option - Offense awarded 5-yards and replay of the down
- Option - Offense accepts result of the play

Illegal Blitz (Defensive player not seven yards off the line of scrimmage blitzing/rushes the QB -- the player must cross the line prior to the pass for this to be assessed)

- Option - Offense awarded 5-yards from the line of scrimmage, replays the down
- Option - Offense accepts result of the play

Illegal Flag Pull (Defensive player pulls (or attempts to pull) an offensive player's flag prior to that player taking possession)

- Option - Offense awarded 5-yards and replay of the down
- Option - Offense accepts result of the play, with an addition 5-yards assessed

Illegal Flag Toss (Defensive player throws flag after pull instead of returning it to the offensive player)

- Offense awarded 5-yards from the spot of the foul (official may also issue warning)
- Depending on the official's judgment of the intent, an Unsportsmanlike Conduct penalty may be assessed

