

Jr. Red Devils Flag Football
3rd - 4th Grade Game Rules and Format

1. Teams will consist of 5 to 7 players per team (10 to 14 kids per field).
2. The format will be Game Play
 - a. Game Play (~ 55mins)
 - consist of two 25 minute halves with a 5 minute half time
 - fields 24 yards wide and 50 yards long
 - games will start with a coin toss (winning team decides to start on offense or defense; losing teams gets choice after halftime)
 - winning team decides to start on offense or defense)
 - ball always starts on the 5 yard line (no kickoffs)
 - The offensive team has 4 downs to get the ball to mid-field for a first down (turnover on downs if ball is not advanced pass mid-field). Other team takes possession at its 5-yard line.
 - If first down is achieved, the offense will have 4 downs to score a touchdown (turnover on downs if a touchdown is not scored). Other team takes possession at its 5-yard line.
 - Play is started by “center” snapping ball to quarterback.
 - All players, including the “center” are considered eligible receivers (no lineman/blocking at the line of scrimmage or downfield is allowed).
 - No blitzing the quarterback.
 - Defense is man to man only (no zone) and defenders line up at the line of scrimmage. Defender covering quarterback must stay on line of scrimmage (no safety). Defender will be able to “rush the quarterback” after referee’s 5 count.
 - On passing plays quarterback will be encouraged to throw the ball by coach/referee within a 5 to 7 second count.
 - Offensive can run the ball once every four downs. There are no running plays allowed within the “red zone”, which is within 10 yards of the goal line. Quarterback can run the ball past line of scrimmage upon being rushed by defender, however if team has already used its “run play” quarterback can not cross line of scrimmage and can only advance the ball by forward pass.
 - The ball carrier will be considered down (i.e. play is over) when defender has pulled flag; the ball carrier steps out of bounds or if ball carrier’s trips/falls and hits the ground; if ball carrier’s flag unintentionally falls off (redoing play at coach/referee discretion); and if ball carrier fumbles the ball (fumbles can not be advanced and are not considered turnovers).
 - Fumbles are a dead ball and count as a down with no loss of possession. The next play will resume at the spot of the fumble. Fumbles between “center” and quarterback on the snap will not be considered a dead ball. It will be coach’s/referee’s discretion to redo play or allow play to resume.

- Interceptions will be considered turnovers (change of possession at point of interception). Having interceptions be live balls will be at discretion of JRRD Board/coaches/referees as the season progresses.
- Touchdown = 6 points. Extra Point = 1 point.
- Coaches should be cognizant of 'pace of play' by minimizing time in the huddle.
- Flags must be accessible (i.e., outside of jersey, properly spaced and properly attached).
- No stiff arms or flag guarding allowed.
- No laterals are allowed once the ball passes the line of scrimmage. If a player runs the ball after receiving the ball from a lateral behind the line of scrimmage, it is considered a run play. At the coach's discretion, downfield laterals can be used at the end of the half or game to add fun/ excitement for a last minute score.
- No tackling or aggressive contact is allowed. Coaches/referee discretion on having a player sit for a few plays, discuss with parents, and eject a player if aggressive play persists. Player safety is #1 priority.
- All players and coaches must be respectful of all referees, coaches, opposing players, and teammates. **As a sign of good sportsmanship coaches/referees should encourage players to hand flags back to the ball carrier after each play.**

Coaching Strategies:

- Randomly assign each player on your team a number (1, 2, 3, ...). Player #1 will be the first quarterback, #2 is the second quarterback, etc. You can rotate turn at QB each play or every 2 plays or each possession. You should encourage all players to take a turn at QB.
- Consider planning a running play for players who are still developing their throwing ability.
- Keep plays simple by having 1 to 2 primary receivers run a specific pattern (separately or coordinated to assist receivers getting open). The remainder of the team can just "get open". Over the years, we have seen that 'short passes turn into long runs'. The "everyone go deep" plays are typically not very successful.
- Players sometimes enjoy improvising plays, so you can run a "everyone get open play" or a "backyard play" at your discretion. This will typically minimize time in the huddle and maintain our pace of play goal.
- Try to keep track of each player's run attempts, targets, receptions, and touchdowns/extra points. We strive to equally distribute the ball to the best of our abilities during the games.
- Teams are randomly sorted on a weekly basis. Coaches/referees can modify the roster at the beginning of the game if the talent balance is not conducive for a competitive game. Similarly, rosters can be switched at half-time if the game is not competitive.