



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Flag Football Rules

YMCA of Greater Omaha Youth Sports

Edited: March 2020

YMCA General Rules and Regulations

BEGINNING OF PLAY

The official shall call both teams to the center of the field to conduct the Youth Sports Pledge prior to the game beginning. At the end of the game the teams shall shake hands.

YMCA OF GREATER OMAHA SPORTS PLEDGE

Win or lose, I pledge before GOD...

To accept and demonstrate the following positive values: Caring, Honesty, Respect, Responsibility.

I will do the best I can to be a team player.

To respect my teammates, opponents, coaches and officials.

And to improve myself in Spirit, Mind, and Body.

YOUTH SPORTS MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the YMCA Youth Sports Program is to provide children of the Greater Omaha area an opportunity to participate in various physical activities and to:

- Have Fun
- Develop Sportsmanship
- Make New Friends
- Promote Teamwork
- Learn Lifetime Fitness
- Strengthen Self-Confidence
- Learn Skills

PRACTICES

Please supervise team members at all time. **DO NOT** leave practice area until all children have been picked up. **DO NOT** stay alone with a single player where you cannot be observed by others. The last team at the gym or field for the night will need to make sure all equipment is picked up and return to the proper storage place.

1. **3-4 yo(IA only) Kindergarten(NE only):** 20 min practice followed by 30-40 min game; may also have one other practice during the week but not required.
2. **IOWA ONLY Kindergarten:** Once the coaches meeting has taken place a coach can schedule one practice per week.
3. **1st – 8th Grade:** Once the coaches meeting has taken place a coach can schedule one practice per week.

SPECIFICS ABOUT SITES:

1. Please dispose of all trash in the proper receptacles.
2. Only water or Gatorade allowed in gyms for participants.
3. Please encourage children to respect private property.
4. Stay off the floor/field after games have concluded as other games need to get started.
5. Remind parents to drive slowly inside the parking lot and to remember they may not be able to park right by the front doors. Do Not Park on Grass Areas or on the Curves of the Driveways! All cars must be parked in a parking space!
6. Do not walk across the gym floors/fields to get to another court/field. Please walk around.
7. Program participants and their families are limited to gym and bathroom areas only.
8. Children must be supervised. Unsupervised children who are misbehaving will be returned to their parents and/or asked to leave.

HEAT INDEX

The YMCA of Greater Omaha believes in providing a safe experience for all youth participating in YMCA sports programs. It should be noted that in any situation the parent and child have the right to choose to participate.

Monitoring Athletes

1. It is recommended that children should drink 4-8 oz of water 15 minutes prior to participating.
2. Children should never be turned-down for a water break. Children must be allowed to take breaks when needed.
3. When the temperature is 80-95 and the humidity is +70%, coaches and parents need to give the kids water breaks after 30 minutes of practice. They should at this time take a 5 minute break.
4. When the temperature is 95-100 and the humidity is + 70%, practices and games shall be shortened. Practices should go for less than 45 minutes, with water breaks every 15 minutes. Water breaks are to be allowed at all times for children participating.
5. When the temperature is + 100, coaches, parents, and administrators will shorten games and take the following steps:
 - Games cut down in time. (Coaches and officials will decide length of the game.) Suggestions: all kids bat one time; play "x" amount of innings; call game after 45 minutes; play 2 innings; practices called off or shortened to 30 minutes.
 - Water breaks are taken every 15 minutes.
 - A water break will be taken at the request of either a coach or official.
 - Any child that does not "feel good" is to be taken out immediately and is to be given aid inside the building or an air conditioned vehicle.

EQUIPMENT

1. The YMCA will furnish game equipment.
2. Individual flag belts and flags will be given to each coach at the beginning of the season.
3. Footballs will be provided for practices
 - Please return all equipment to the YMCA at the end of the season.
4. Players should not wear anything that is dangerous to them or others; i.e. watches, rings, necklaces, etc.
5. Metal cleats are prohibited.
6. Headwear that may cause injury to other participants is not allowed.
7. All players must wear a mouth guard. Any player not wearing a mouth guard will not be allowed to play.

Uniform

1. Flag Football will use two separate colored jerseys. Home team will wear red/white; Away team will wear blue/black.
 - a. We encourage all athletes to bring both jerseys to all games.
2. If you need a jersey we ask that you see your YMCA's Welcome Desk on information on how to purchase the jersey. All athletes should have or purchase the correct jersey for their sport. Athletic or sport-appropriate shoes and shorts and/or sweats should be worn in addition to the jersey.

YMCA STAFF

YMCA personnel shall be present and visible at all games. If you encounter any problems or have questions, please contact the site supervisor, official or the Youth Sports Director. If you have a question or suggestion concerning the game or league, please present it before or after the game to the site supervisor, NOT during the game. This can be distracting to the coaches, players, officials, and other fans.

Officials:

1. Have jurisdiction from the beginning until the end of the game. Their decisions are final.
2. May caution or eject a player/coach/fan for unsportsmanlike conduct.
3. May terminate a game if the game becomes a travesty.
4. We will not tolerate any abuse toward officials. Discuss problems or questions with the Site Supervisor or call your YMCA Sport Director.

Flag Football Specific Rules and Regulations

RULE CHANGES prior to Fall 2019

Handoffs/Lateral/Backwards Pass Rule

3 yo-2nd Grades: Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Teams may use multiple handoffs, but they must be behind the line of scrimmage.

3rd-8th Grades: Direct handoffs and lateral/pitch are permitted only behind the line of scrimmage. Offense may use multiple handoffs, but are allowed only one lateral or pitch.

3yo-8th Grades: Forward passes may be caught behind the line of scrimmage.

FIELD & EQUIPMENT

Grade Level

3 years - 2nd Grade

3rd- 6th Grade

7th & 8th Grade

Ball Size

Pee Wee

Junior

Youth

Grade Level

3 years - 2nd Grade

3rd - 8th Grade

Field Size (Goal Line to Goal Line)

20 x 40yds

30 x 50yds

Field size may be altered slightly for space and safety issues.

PLAYERS

Grade Level

K-8th Grades

Players on field per team

5

COACHES

Grade Level

3 years - 8th Grade

3 years - 8th Grade

Number of Coaches

1 Coach allowed on the field prior to snap

2 Coaches will be allowed on the sideline

- The Head Coach is the only coach allowed to address the officials before, during, or after the game. Assistant coaches may confer with players; not officials.
- If an injury occurs, coaches shall wait for an official or YMCA staff person to call them over. This is to ensure safety of all players and avoid any incidents from a coach running onto the court unexpectedly.
- Under no circumstances shall any coach confer with a player or coach from opposite team unexpectedly or negatively.

FAIR PLAY RULE

****Each player should play half of every game****

All players shall have the opportunity to participate in games for a fair and equal amount of time.

Allowances can be made by the coach based on enthusiasm, sportsmanship and interest displayed at practices and games. (Minimum of one quarter)

GAME TIME AND TIMEOUTS

Game Time

1. **3 years - Kind:** Games are played with four 8 minute quarters; 4 minute halftime.
2. **1st-8th Grades:** Games are played with four 10 minute quarters; 5 minute halftime.
3. No Overtime.
4. Clock stops on timeouts, delay of game and at the official's discretion.
5. Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball.
 - Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.
 - Teams must wait until Official indicates "ready to play" before snapping

Timeouts

1. Each team has one 60-second and one 30-second time out per half.

DIVISON SPECIFIC RULES

PLAYING RULES

1. A coin toss determines first possession; teams switch possession at halftime.
2. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has three (3) plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three (3) plays to score a touchdown. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on its 5-yard line.
3. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its 5-yard line.
4. All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yard line.
5. Coaches will be allowed in the huddle.
6. Game time is forfeit time. A game may be started and played with 4 players.
7. **No blitzing will be allowed if a team is up by more than 21 points.**
8. Flip score will be kept on the field for 1st Grade & Up; no score kept for 3yo - Kindergarten.

SCORING

Touchdown:	6 points
Extra point:	1 point (played from 5-yard line; PASS ONLY)
	2 points (played from 12-yard line; RUN or PASS)
Safety:	2 points

RESPECT RULE

If a team increases their lead to 21 over their opponent the *RESPECT RULE* will go into effect until end of game OR the lead decreases to below 21 points. Our *RESPECT RULE* is in place to ensure a positive experience for all participants. The following will happen once the *RESPECT RULE* is in affect:

- Defensive rushing will not be permitted; defense shall play 5 yards back at time of snap
- Score on scoreboard will freeze and will only be changed if the team behind scores
 - Score will be kept on a score sheet to ensure scores are correct
- Coaches should consider making adjustments to game plan to allow more success for all players on both teams

RUNNING

1. The quarterback cannot run with the ball.
2. **3 yo-2nd Grades:** Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Teams may use multiple handoffs, but they must be behind the line of scrimmage.
3. **3rd-8th Grades:** Direct handoffs and lateral/pitch are permitted only behind the line of scrimmage. Offense may use multiple handoffs, but are allowed only one lateral or pitch.
4. **3yo-8th Grades:** "No-running zones," located 5 yards from each end zone and 5 yards on either side of midfield, are designed to avoid short-yardage, power-running situations.
5. The player who takes the handoff or pitch/lateral can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
6. Once the ball has been handed off or pitched, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
7. Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a defensive player (no diving).
8. The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.

RECEIVING

1. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback) if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage.
2. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time.
3. A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.

PASSING

1. The quarterback has a 7-second "pass clock." If a pass is not thrown within 7 seconds, the play is dead; loss of down. Once the ball is handed off, the 7-second rule is no longer in effect.

Defense

1. **No Tackling is Allowed**
2. **3yo-2nd Grades:** Interceptions change the possession of the ball at **the point of interception**. Interceptions **may not be returned** by the defense.
3. **3-8th Grades:** Interceptions **can be returned** and possession starts from the point of the flag pull.
4. **3yo – 2nd Grade:** There has to be a clean pass/catch behind the line of scrimmage before the defense can cross the line of scrimmage.
5. **3rd – 8th Grade:** Defenses can cross the line of scrimmage when ball leaves QB hand on forward pass. Must wait for ball carrier to control ball if lateral/pass backwards from QB.

Defense Cont. - RUSHING THE QUARTERBACK

1. All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of 7 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped.
 - A special marker, or the referee, will designate 7 yards from the line of scrimmage
2. Any number of players can rush the quarterback.
3. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage.
4. Once the ball is handed off, the 7-yard rule no longer is in effect, and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
5. Blocking is allowed at the line of scrimmage only. Arms must be crossed and held flat against the upper chest. If player extends their arms out from their body, they will be flagged. Player may shuffle feet. Once player blocking goes beyond the line of scrimmage, they become an eligible receiver and may no longer block.

DEAD BALLS

1. The ball must be snapped between the legs, not off to one side to start play.
2. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
3. Play is ruled "dead" when:
 - Ball carrier's flag is pulled.
 - Ball carrier steps out of bounds.
 - Touchdown or safety is scored.
 - Passer throws the ball from beyond the line of scrimmage.
 - Ball carrier's knee hits the ground.
 - Ball carrier's flag falls out.
 - When ball hits the ground (ball spotted at spot it hits ground if "fumbled")
 - When lining up in shut gun formation if the ball is snapped over the QB's head and lands in the end zone this is a safety.

PENALTIES

Defense:

Offsides (dead ball)	5 yards; repeat down
Interference	5 yards; automatic first down
Illegal contact (holding, blocking, etc.)	5 yards; automatic first down
Illegal flag pull (pulling of anyone without ball)	5 yards; automatic first down
Illegal rushing (From inside 7-yard marker)	5 yards; automatic first down

Offense:

Illegal motion	5 yards; repeat down
More than one person moving, false start, etc.	
Illegal forward pass	5 yards; loss of down
Offensive pass interference	5 yards; loss of down
Illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender	
Flag guarding	5 yards (from line of scrimmage); Loss of down
Delay of game (dead ball)	5 yards; Loss of down

1. Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage.
2. Only the team captain may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players cannot question judgment calls.
3. Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.

OFFICIALS AND THEIR DUTIES

Officials

1. The referee has jurisdiction from the time he/she enters the area of the play until signaling the end of the game. The referee's decisions are final.
2. The referee shall enforce the rules of the game.
3. The referee can suspend or terminate a game whenever it is deemed necessary; for example interference by spectators or coaches.
4. The referee can caution a player and eject from play any player quality of violent conduct, use of foul or abusive language, or persistent infringement of the playing rules. That player must sit out the next game.
5. The referee shall officiate the coin toss; choice of either receive or defend to winner of toss.
6. Teams shall change sides at the completion of each half.
7. Prior to coin flip, referee will have a pre-game meeting with coaches/captains from both teams to discuss basic game rules/procedures.

SPORTSMANSHIP

1. If the site supervisor or referee witness any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking, or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game. **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.**
2. Trash talking is illegal. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. (Trash talk is talk that may be offensive to officials, opposing players, teams, or spectators.)
 - If trash talking occurs, the referee will give one warning.
 - If it continues, the players or players will be ejected from the game.

COACH/PARENT/FAN CODE OF CONDUCT

We ask that you try your best to uphold this code, so that everyone can enjoy their experience. As a YMCA parent, we ask that you:

- Encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, and officials at every game, practice, or event.
- Place the emotional and physical wellbeing of the players ahead of your personal desire to win.
- Demand a drug, alcohol, and tobacco free sports event and agree to assist by refraining from their use at all youth sports events.
- Ask your child to treat other players, coaches, fans, and officials with respect.
- Promise to help your child enjoy the youth sports experience by fostering good sportsmanship, assisting in coaching, being a respectful fan, and modeling that behavior for your child.
- Have your child participate in as many practices and games as possible while providing proper supervision for all of the children brought to practices and games.
- Attend practices and games to support your child's participation.
- Be a positive role model for your child and the other players on his/her team.
- Not use profanity or vulgar speech while observing your child's activities.
- Not coach your child, or other children, during games if you are not an official coach.
- Keep off of the playing field at all times, unless specifically told otherwise by an official or coach.
- Refrain from bringing a dog or other animal to practices or games. Pets are not allowed at many locations.
- Resolve conflicts without regressing to hostility or violence.
- Not encourage any behavior that could be dangerous to your child or the other children.
- Not taunt, heckle, argue with, any coach, official, or opposing player during the course of your child's games/practices.

Policy Enforcement

- Individual may be given a warning for inappropriate behavior.
- Individual may be asked to leave the game(s) and may be asked to not return for other Youth Sports activities
- Other sanctions as deemed necessary may be enforced

Thank you for choosing YMCA Youth Sports!

If you have questions, please contact the sports staff at your YMCA branch.

metroymca.org