



## **FLAG FOOTBALL RULES AND REGULATIONS**

The current issue of the National Federation of High Schools Rule Book will prevail other than the exceptions listed in this publication. FCPR as needed may issue Addendums and Clarifications to these rules. No other local league rule exceptions will be allowed. These are the sport specific rules – you must also obtain a copy of the Basic Rules For All Youth Sports for complete information.

### **1:00 AGE GROUPS / ROSTERS:**

1:01 **For boys and girls in the following age groups:**

8U (7 & 8 year olds)

14U (13 & 14 year olds)

1:02 League age is determined by the player's age prior to December 1.

1:03 There will be no exceptions allowed in the age groups.

1:04 There is no weight limit.

1:05 Each team will have a minimum of 13 and a maximum of 16 players on roster.

1:06 Each team is allowed 4 coaches.

### **2:00 EQUIPMENT:**

2:01 Players are not permitted to wear shoulder pads, helmets or any other hard and unyielding item. Personal protective items such as arm sleeves and knee, thigh, hip, tail pads are allowed.

2:02 Shoes must be tennis shoes or rubber-molded cleats. No screw-in cleats, metal cleats, etc.!

2:03 Mouthpieces are mandatory - players cannot participate without them.

2:04 Failure to wear proper equipment will result in a 15-yard penalty charged to the head coach.

### **3:00 SEASON GAMES:**

3:01 All regular season games shall consist of two 15-minute halves with a running clock until the last 3 minutes of each half. If a team is ahead by 24 points the clock will not stop in the last 3 minutes of each half.

- 3:02 All players must play 1 scrimmage down in each half. Penalty for violation - Head Coach will be suspended for 10 days.
- 3:03 Each team is allowed 3 time-outs per half.
- 3:04 Half-time will consist of a 10 minute interval.
- 3:05 Each team will play 1 game per week.
- 3:06 The field will be 80 yards in length.
- 3:07 A minimum of 8 players must be present for a team to participate in a game. A team will forfeit the game if it does not have at least 8 players on the field within 10 minutes after the scheduled starting time for the first game of the day. All other games will begin or be forfeited at the scheduled starting time or immediately after the 10-minute warm-up period if the preceding game exceeds the schedule starting time of the following game.
- 3:08 Both teams (offense & defense) will have 8 players on the field. The offense consists of 5 linemen and 3 backs. The defense may have no more than 5 players on the line of scrimmage. **PENALTY:** 5 yards if the defense has more than 5 players on the line of scrimmage.
- 3:09 **ALL PLAYERS ARE ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE A PASS.** A pass or multiple passes may be thrown from anywhere on the field, behind or in front of the line of scrimmage. A screen pass is legal. If a pass is released beyond the line of scrimmage and is incomplete, the ball is put in play from the point the passer released the ball. **EACH TEAM MUST ATTEMPT 1 PASS PER SERIES.** The penalty for not attempting 1 pass per series is as follows: 15 yards from the 5th down line of scrimmage plus loss of possession.
- NOTE:** This rule does not apply if a team scores a touchdown by a pass on fifth (5th) down or the below stated situations:
- a team scores a touchdown in under 5 plays
  - a team gets a first (1st) down in under 5 plays
  - a team commits a turnover in under 5 plays
- 3:10 Each team will be permitted a 10-minute warm-up period before each game.
- 3:11 Each team will be allowed 5 downs to make a touchdown or first down (MID-FIELD) unless possession of the ball is lost.
- 3:12 The ball-carrier must not use the stiff-arm against a defender.  
**PENALTY - 10 YARDS.**
- 3:13 A kicked or punted ball which strikes the ground after being touched by a player is dead.
- 3:14 On-sides kicks are not legal.
- 3:15 A player who catches any kick may pass the ball at any time.

- 3:16 A ball-carrier may not be restrained by holding at any time.  
PENALTY - 10 YARDS.
- 3:17 If a ball-carrier loses his flag, the ball becomes dead and the play is ended.
- 3:18 There are no fumbles - the ball is dead when it touches the ground (except in a scrimmage kick formation - see rule 3:25).
- 3:19 One coach will be allowed on the field with his/her team. Once the team breaks from the huddle, the coach must leave the immediate area and must not direct the players or approach the officials. **PENALTY:** first violation, 10 yards; second violation, removal from the game as an **on-field** coach. On-field coaches will be allowed no more than 30 seconds in the huddle. **PENALTY:** 10 yards. The 30-second allotment begins once the official spots the ball. **NOTE:** One coach must remain on the sideline with the team at all times.
- 3:20 SCORES: touchdown = 6 points  
extra point run = 1 point  
extra point pass = 2 points  
safety = 2 points
- 3:21 Kick-off will be a place kick from the 30-yard line. A kick out-of-bounds will be kicked over. After 2 unsuccessful kicks, the ball will be put in play at the 40-yard line.
- 3:22 Players must have their wrist and hand in contact with their own body while blocking. Blocking must be above the waistline.
- 3:23 Any block where a player leaves their feet is illegal.
- 3:24 Downfield blocking will not be allowed. At no time will blocking take place other than at the line of scrimmage, or behind the line of scrimmage when on offense.
- PENALTY FOR VIOLATION OF 3:21, 3:22, 3:23; TEN YARDS FROM THE POINT OF INFRACTION.
- 3:25 Tackling, striking, kicking, or kneeling a player will result in immediate ejection from the game. If a player tackles a ball carrier, the offensive team will be rewarded with a 1st down at the 1-yard line of the defense. **NOTE:** Tackling is the intentional act of knocking a player off his feet, to the ground, or out-of-bounds.
- 3:26 When punting, the defensive team cannot rush the punter; the kicking team cannot leave the line of scrimmage until the ball is kicked. Offensive team must notify the official that they are punting. If the punter drops the snap, the punter can pick the ball up and kick it away. When a team notifies the official that they are punting, it means they are giving up possession of the ball. Regardless of the direction of the punt, (whether it crosses the neutral zone or not, the kicking team cannot regain possession of the punted ball. NO FAKE PUNTS.
- 3:27 If the quarterback is in "shotgun" formation, the defender directly opposite the center (snapper) must be 3 yards off the line of scrimmage.

- 3:28 If the quarterback is under center, the defender directly opposite the center (snapper) can be at the line of scrimmage in a standing position (not a three point stance).
- 3:29 The "center sneak" is illegal and shall not be allowed.
- 3:30 A 1st down will be awarded when the offensive team advances to the mid-field line (40 yard line).
- 3:31 Ties in the 8u league will not be resolved by overtime play. The 14U league will use the high school procedure to resolve ties.
- 3:32 Anytime Team A is ahead of Team B by 24 points or more, there shall be no kick-off from Team A to Team B. Team B shall be awarded the ball at the 40-yard line. Team B will be allowed a normal possession (1st downs, touchdown, punt, turnover). Note: Team does not keep the ball indefinitely. Team A and Team B will alternate possessions just like standard football. The only difference is that there are no kick-offs to the team that is down by at least 24 points. Kick-offs to the team that is behind will be resumed when the point differential is less than 24. As long as the 24-point differential is maintained, Team A must use the balance of its reserve players in lieu of any first string player.

#### **4:00 FIELD CREW**

- 4:01 The field crew is considered an extension of the game officials and should conduct themselves accordingly.
- 4:02 The home team shall provide 1 volunteer to operate the down marker.**
- 4:03 If the home team cannot fulfill this duty then the visiting team may offer to help or field the entire crew.
- 4:04 NO player or players listed on the roster of either team or any player dressed in a uniform will be allowed on the field crew.
- 4:05 Any member of the field crew that is guilty of coaching while serving as a game official will be dealt with in the following manner:
- A. First offense shall be a warning to the crewmember and the head coach of the offending team.
  - B. Second offense to the same crewmember will result in a 15-yard unsportsmanlike penalty charged to the head coach.
  - C. Third offense to the same crewmember shall be another 15-yard unsportsmanlike penalty charged to the head coach and the removal of the offending crewmember.
  - D. This process will apply to all members of the field crew.  
The game officials will have the duty to enforce the penalty for this rule violation. It will be the duty of the field supervisor or a recreation department staff member to inform the officials of the infraction.

### **PLAYING TERMS AND DEFINITIONS**

#### **SECTION I. FLAG FOOTBALL, FLAG BELT, DE-FLAGGING**

- Article 1.** Flag football is played in a manner similar to either regular tackle football or touch football, with the exception of the method of stopping the advance of the ball carrier. This is accomplished by "de-flagging", i.e., the capture by a defensive player of one of the two flags which are worn on the ball carrier's belt.

- Article 2.** The flag belt may be either the official belt complete with snap-out sockets, or an ordinary leather or web belt to which the snap-out sockets have been attached by means of a leather slip-on device.
- Article 3.** The flag is a 2" x 16" plastic strip attached to the flag belt by means of a ball and socket snap-out device.
- Article 4.** De-flagging is the capture of a ball carrier's flag by a defensive player. This takes the place of tackling in standard football.
- Article 5.** The flag must be cleanly taken from the ball carrier. If, attempting to take the flag,, the defensive player holds the ball-carrier until the flag can be removed, this is a foul with a **penalty** of ten (10) yards from spot of violation.
- Article 6.** If the defensive player unnecessarily knocks the ball carrier down (tackle) in attempting to capture the flag, it is a foul. The defender is ejected and the offense is awarded a first down at the defensive team's one (1) yard line.
- Article 7.** A down shall be ended and the ball declared dead when the flag is cleanly removed from the ball carrier's belt. The de-flagger should immediately hold the flag above his head at the spot where the capture occurred.
- Article 8.** Should the de-flagger accidentally drop the flag after capture, it remains a valid play. Should the ball carrier lose a flag, the ball is returned to that spot.
- Article 9.** A defensive player may intercept any pass providing his two (2) flags are attached to his belt.

## **SECTION II. BALL-CARRIER MANEUVERS**

- Article 1.** In protecting his flags, the ball carrier must adhere to the following rules:
- (a) The ball carrier may not use a stiff-arm on the defensive player. This is a ten (10) yard penalty from spot of the foul.
  - (b) The ball carrier must give the defense a fair chance to take the flag. Any attempt by the ball carrier to knock the hands of the defense away from the flag is a foul and shall draw a ten (10) yard penalty from the spot of the foul. The ball carrier must keep his hands and arms above the flag to avoid penalty.
- A. In scoring, the ball carrier must have both flags attached to belt when crossing the goal line.
- Article 2.** HURDLING - While trying to advance the ball, the ball carrier must "KEEP HIS FEET". Attempts to avoid an opponent by jumping or diving over or into him shall be a violation. The penalty is five (5) yards from the spot of the foul.

## **SECTION III. BLOCKING**

**Article 1.** Blocking shall be done by use of the arms and body without the use of the hands. The blocking must be construed to be checking (screening) with the body in an upright position. No part of the blocker's body, except his feet, shall be in contact with the ground throughout the block. There shall be no "rolling blocks".

**Article 2.** Defensive players are restricted in the use of their hands to the torso and shoulders of offensive blockers.

**Article 3.** Hands shall remain down and blocking shall consist of shoulder or brush blocking. Line blocker may use the armpit tactic. Illegal blocking will result in a ten (10) yard penalty. Butting or the use of the point of the elbow shall result in a ten (10) yard penalty.

**Article 4.** Blocking or pushing a ball carrier out-of-bounds to stop his progress is a foul with an automatic first (1st) down at the one (1) yard line. The player is ejected. THE BALL-CARRIERS PROGRESS CAN BE STOPPED ONLY BY DE-FLAGGING HIM.

**Article 5.** Knee blocking or tripping used in slowing down a ball carrier for the purpose of capturing his flags shall be a foul with a ten (10) yard penalty.

**NOTE:** If a defensive player is guilty of any of the above stated penalties on 5th down, the offensive team has the option to replay the down and take the penalty from the point of the foul or decline the penalty.

## **LIGHTNING & THUNDER POLICY**

All athletic activities conducted on Fayetteville – Cumberland Parks and Recreation facilities or any of its affiliated facilities or programs will follow the lightning policy as written below.

- 1. It shall be the responsibility of the umpire to suspend the game once lightning or thunder is noticed.**
- 2. However, if in the opinion of the field supervisor and/or center staff the umpire is not using good judgment they have the authority and the responsibility to suspend the game and clear the area.**
- 3. Once lightning or thunder is noticed the game shall stop immediately and the area cleared.**
- 4. The activity shall be suspended immediately for a minimum of 15 minutes and a maximum of 20 minutes.**
- 5. This delay will only be allowed if safe cover for all of the participants and players is available**
- 6. Once the game has reached the delay time limit the field supervisor and the umpires shall confer to make a decision to continue the game or to cancel the remainder of the game. If the 1<sup>st</sup> game of the day is cancelled, all remaining games for that site will also be cancelled.**
- 7. Under no circumstances will players be allowed to remain in the dugout during this delay.**
- 8. All participants must have a safe and protected area available for their use.**
- 9. Examples of safe and protected areas include permanent enclosed structures and automobiles.**
- 10. If one participant does not have a safe and protected area available for their use the event is to be cancelled.**
- 11. If a permanent site does not exist automobiles may be used.**
- 12. Do not let pressure from the coaches influence your judgment.**
- 13. Remember, Safety First. A game can always be rescheduled.**

