

ROCKFORD YOUTH FOOTBALL LEAGUE
2017 FLAG FOOTBALL
RULES

Flag Football is operated as an in-house component of the West Michigan Youth Football League (WMYFL). **In order to have uniformity among programs the following rules will be used by all members of the Rockford Youth Football League.**

1. Flag football teams will consist of 8-10 players and a Coach who shall serve as the Quarterback when the team is on offense. The coach shall not participate when the team is on defense. **LESS THAN 8 PLAYERS IS PERMISSABLE, IF THERE ARE LIMITED PARTICIPANTS.**
2. Football Sizes
 - Pre/DK/K will use the midget size football
 - 1st/2nd will use the blue NFL Flag Footballs which are similar in size to the youth football used by our 3rd/4th grade tackle teams.
3. **2015 *Coaches:** Coaches are volunteers helping the players learn and enjoy the game. Parents are encouraged to support the coach at all time. Coaches are allowed on the field to direct players according to need and division.
4. **2015* Pre/DK/K Each player should run the football as equally as possible. It is the responsibility of the Coach to make sure that each player gets to act as a running back and be able to run the ball. Each Pre/DK/K team is to RUN the football only, no laterals or forward passes.**
5. **2015* 1st/2nd Grade Flag Only:** Players will be the quarterback for the 1st/2nd grade teams. It will be the responsibility of the coach to organize the team during play and ensure that each player has the opportunity to run or receive the ball during the game. All players don't have to be QB but should be given the opportunity if they desire. Coaches must move away from the play as to not interfere prior to the snap of the ball. **Passing will be allowed at the 1st/2nd grade level ONLY!**
6. **2015* Referees (1st/2nd Grade only):** Coaches for 1st/2nd grade teams will act as referees during the game. **ONE** coach from each team may remain on the field during the game and will act as the referee. Referees will make reasonable calls during the game as well as keep the pace of the game.
7. **2015*Passing 1st/2nd Grade Only:**
 1. All passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage.
 2. Shovel passes are allowed, but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
 3. The quarterback has a seven-second "pass clock." **(7-second is count of the coach no player should cross the line of scrimmage until the 7-seconds have elapsed!)** If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, play is dead, the down is consumed and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off, the 7-second rule no longer is in effect.
 4. The quarterback is not allowed to rush the ball (QB sneak).

- 8. 2015* Receiving 1st/2nd Grade Only:**
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. All motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted towards the line of scrimmage.
 3. A player must have a least one foot inbounds when making a reception.
 4. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
 5. Interceptions change the possession of the ball at the point of interception
- 9. 2015* Rushing the Passer 1st/2nd Grade Only:**
1. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage.
 2. Once the ball is handed off, the seven-yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
 3. A special marker, or the referee, will designate a Rush Line seven yards from the line of scrimmage. Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.
 - a.** A legal rush is:
 - i. Any rush from a point of the defensive line of scrimmage.
 - ii. A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off by the quarterback.
 - iii. If a rusher leaves the rush line early they may return to the rush line, reset and then legally rush the quarterback.
 - b.** A penalty may be called if:
 - i. The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff or pass – Illegal Rush (5 yards LOS and first down).
 - ii. Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped – Offside (5 yards LOS and first down).
 - iii. Any defensive player, not lined up at the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed or handed off – Illegal Rush (5 yards LOS and first down).
 - c.** Special circumstances:
 - i. Teams are not required to rush the quarterback, seven second clock in effect.
 - ii. Teams are not required to identify their rusher before they play, however, if they do send a rusher, the rusher must verify with the official that they are in the correct position.
 - iii. If rusher leaves the line of scrimmage before the snap, he/she may immediately drop back to act as defender with no offside penalty enforced.
 4. Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however, NO contact can be made with the quarterback in any way. Blocking the pass or attempting to block the pass and then making contact with the passer will result in a roughing the passer penalty.
 5. The offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has the right to a clear path to the quarterback, regardless of where they line up prior to the snap. If the “path or line” is occupied by a moving offensive player, then it is the offense’s responsibility to avoid the rusher. Any disruption to the rusher’s path and/or contact will result in an impeding the rusher penalty. If the offensive player does not move after the snap, then it is the rusher’s responsibility to go around the offensive player and to avoid contact.

6. A sack occurs if the quarterback's flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball is placed where the quarterback's feet are when flag is pulled.
10. **2015* Pre-K/DK/K It is the responsibility of the coaches to not only perform as quarterback but also as the REFEREE for their game. The coach on defense shall act as referee during the game, or an assistant coach shall be designated the role of referee throughout the game. Coaches must abide by the rules of Flag Football established by the WMYFL and Rockford Youth Football. Any divergence from these rules must be agreed upon by the Field Director(s) and opposing coach prior to each game.**
 11. There are two 20-minute halves. The clock shall run continuously.
 12. First downs are made by crossing the ten yard lines. The ball is started on the 10 yard line for every possession. If the ball crosses the 20, 30, or 40 yard line a first down is awarded regardless of the previous spot of the ball. If the ball is marked on the 28 yard line, then you only need 2 yards to obtain a first down.
 13. **BLOCKING** - Only open hand, straight-arm blocking between **two** players is allowed **There are NO double team blocks. NO contact is allowed above the shoulders or below the waist. PLAYERS MAY NOT LEAVE THEIR FEET TO BLOCK. NO rolling blocks, grabbing the jersey of an opponent while attempting to block (holding), interlocking of hands, or swinging, throwing or flipping the elbow or forearm, will be allowed. IN ORDER TO KEEP BLOCKING UNDER CONTROL, COACHES MUST INSTRUCT AND REFEREES WILL ENFORCE KEEPING THE BLOCKING WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE BLOCKERS BODY (straight arm/open handed) TO AVOID UNECESSARY ROUGH PLAY AND ENCOURAGE SPORSTMANSHIP IN THIS CONTACT.**
 14. **THERE ARE NO FUMBLES IN FLAG FOOTBALL. DURING A PLAY THE BALL IS RULED DEAD AT THE SPOT IT HITS THE GROUND. PLAYERS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO DIVE ON THE GROUND FOR A DEAD BALL.**
 15. **2015****There will be two age divisions for *Flag Football* will be **Pre/DK/K and 1st/2nd Grade. In Flag Football a player's age on September 1st of the current year shall determine the player's age for the year. THERE ARE NO WEIGHT LIMIT REQUIREMENTS and THERE WILL BE NO AGE DIVISION CROSSOVERS- NO PLAYING UP OR DOWN, REGARDLESS OF SIZE. THESE ARE STRICTLY AGE DIVISIONS.**
 16. **DEFLAGGING** (*tackling*) - Is the legal removal of a flag from an opponent in possession of the ball. **Pushing, striking, holding, slapping, or tripping when attempting to remove a flag during the course of a play is not permitted. Defensive players may leave their feet to remove the flag from a ball carrier. Offensive players are not permitted to protect or guard their flags. When a flag is clearly removed from the ball carrier, play is stopped, the ball is dead and the down is over. A player removing a flag from the runner should immediately hold the flag above his/her**

head to indicate to the official that the de-flagging (tackle) has taken place. This also assists the official in spotting the ball. If in the event a flag inadvertently falls to the ground, a two-hand tag between the shoulders and knees substitutes for de-flagging.

17. **DEFENSE**- Use of hands/arms by players on defense follows strict guidelines enforced by the referees, to minimize contact and unnecessary roughness. Defensive players **MAY NOT** use arms/hands as a wedge to contact an opponent (blocker), they **MUST** go around the offensive player's screen block. THE APPLICATION OF THIS RULE DEPENDS ENTIRELY ON THE JUDGEMENT OF THE OFFICIAL AND ALL REFEREES WILL BE INSTRUCTED ON SUCH INTERPRETATION PRIOR TO THE FIRST GAME OF THE SEASON. A player may use his/her arms to break a fall or to maintain balance.

18. THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS ARE ILLEGAL AND AVOIDING SUCH BEHAVIOR SHOULD BE PART OF THE COACHING ACTIVITIES OF ALL COACHES WITHIN THE WMYFL
ILLEGALLY SECURED FLAG BELT
SPIKING, KICKING, THROWING OR NOT RETURNING THE BALL TO THE REFEREE
HURDLING (of another player)
RUNNING OR DRIVING INTO ANOTHER PLAYER
TWO-ON-ONE BLOCKING (double team)
TACKLING
ILLEGAL CONTACT (including roughing the passer)
CONTACT WITH ANYTHING OTHER THAN OPEN HANDS AND EXTENDED ARMS
TRIPPING
CLIPPING (hitting from behind)
TAUNTING, SWEARING OR FIGHTING

19. The Rockford Youth Football League - Flag Football season will be **5 weeks** long. Each team will be allowed four practices total throughout this four week period. After teams have had their 4th and final practice which should occur prior to the last game of the season, teams are NOT allowed to have any additional practices thereafter. **Five games will be scheduled (one a week)**. All efforts regarding scheduling, practice time etc. should be made as equitably as possible by head coaches. Coaches will dictate time and location of practices. Starting time for the season will be prior to the start of the of the regular WMYFL season. **It is recommended that all flag football activities be concluded by the 5th regularly scheduled WMYFL game. 2003 "FLAG WINDOW" shall exist from August 1- September 31, flag practices, games etc. should take place during this time frame. IF A FLAG FOOTBALL GAME IS CANCELLED DUE TO WEATHER, IT WILL NOT BE RESCHEDULED.**

20. **NO PLAYER MAY PARTICIPATE IN BOTH FLAG FOOTBALL AND THE 3rd/4th Grade DIVISION WMYFL ACTIVITIES, REGARDLESS OF BIRTHDATE. 8 YEAR OLDS MUST PLAY Tackle FOOTBALL **NO EXCEPTIONS.**

21. 2011*Cleats are allowed for the Flag season. **NO METAL TIPPED CLEATS ARE ALLOWED!** If the player wears soccer cleats, the front toe cleat must be removed. Cleats will be checked prior to each game by Field Director(s) and the coaches of each team. If a player wears metal tipped cleats, they **WILL NOT** be able to participate in the game unless a pair of non-metal tipped cleats or tennis shoes are available. Players are not allowed to play bare foot or with inappropriate footwear for safety.

IN ORDER FOR FLAG FOOTBALL TO BE A SAFE, FUN ACTIVITY FOR CHILDREN AND FOR IT TO SERVE AS AN INTRODUCTION TO ROCKET FOOTBALL MAXIMUM EFFORT WILL BE NEEDED BY ALL INVOLVED. COACHES NEED TO BE ESPECIALLY ATTUNED TO THE AGE DIFFERENCE/LESS CONTACT/LESS COMPETITIVE NATURE OF THIS PROGRAM. FLAG FOOTBALL COACHES WILL NOT BE INVOLVED WITH COACHING ANOTHER WMYFL TEAM IN THE UPPER AGED DIVISIONS UNLESS FLAG ACTIVITIES ARE COMPLETED PRIOR TO TACKLE ACTION UNLESS APPROVED BY FIELD DIRECTORS. THERE ARE NO KICKOFFS OR PUNTS AND THE BALL IS PUT IN PLAY THROUGH THE HANDS OF THE ADULT COACH/QB. ENCOURAGE ALL PLAYERS TO PLAY NUMEROUS POSITIONS ON BOTH OFFENSE AND DEFENSE. THIS WILL MAKE THE GAME MORE INTERESTING AND FUN AND WILL ENCOURAGE FUTURE PARTICIPATION IN ROCKET FOOTBALL. ENCOURAGE PARENTS TO ATTEND PRACTICES AND GAMES AND TO BE SUPPORTIVE AND GOOD SPORTS. FLAG FOOTBALL IS AN ACTIVITY NOT LIFE OR DEATH. OFFICIALS SHOULD BE SELECTED AND TRAINED TO BE IMPARTIAL, FAIR AND ABOVE ALL INSIST ON SPORTSMANSHIP BY ALL INVOLVED.

ALL WEST MICHIGAN YOUTH FOOTBALL LEAGUE RULES REGARDING AGES OF COACHES AND OFFICIALS SHALL ALSO APPLY IN THE FLAG FOOTBALL COMPONENT. EACH AREA FIELD DIRECTOR SHALL COMMUNICATE IN WRITING TO THE LEAGUE ANY AND ALL INFORMATION REGARDING NUMBERS OF PLAYERS/TEAMS/COACHES/INJURY REPORTS ETC. AS WELL AS A FINAL REPORT ON THE FLAG FOOTBALL SEASON. *WMYFL MEMBER AREAS OPERATING "FLAG FOOTBALL" ARE GRANTED A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF LATITUDE, WITHIN REASONABLE LIMITS, WHILE OPERATING THIS PROGRAM IN-HOUSE.*