

# JFC YOUTH FLAG FOOTBALL RULES (K-6th)

(Adapted from NFL Flag Football Rules)

## Game Rules for K-6th:

- All games start with the away team having the ball first. Drive will start on whichever side they warmed up on. Home team wears blue, away team wears white.
- The game is played 5 vs 5 (unless larger teams must be used). Maximum of 10 per team (or more if on field players expand).
- The field will be 58-60 yards long by 30 yards wide, plus 6-7 yard endzones.
- Offense starts out on their own 5 yard line of each every possession, except on interceptions. Interceptions will result in that team starting their drive at wherever that interceptor's flag were pulled or stepped out of bounds, UNLESS they cross the half field mark (30 yd line) on the interception return, in that case, they will start their possession at half field (2 points awarded if they run the interception back for a TD).
- The offense has four downs to reach half field (30 yards) for a new first down. If they cross half field, they start with four more downs to reach the touchdown. If they do not cross half field OR do so but do not score a touchdown in the next four plays, the ball will be turned over to the opponent at their own 5 yard line (except interceptions). In the second half teams switch sides.

## Game Timing for K-6th:

- Games will consist of two to three possessions for each team per half, trying to stay around 20-25 minutes per half. In a situation where a team that has intercepted the ball, they will start one of their three possessions from the spot they are down on the interception return, unless they cross the 30 yard line (midfield), in which case the ball will be brought back to mid field to start their possession (2 points for an interception return to the endzone and still start from midfield). In the second half, depending on timing to the next game, the referee may move the last possession to starting at midfield, or adjust how they see fit.
- Teams will be asked to stay within a 30 second play clock between plays.
- Each team will have two 30 second timeouts per half.
- Halftime will be roughly 3 - 5 minutes long and include a devotion.

## Equipment Requirements:

- All players must wear a mouthguard (provided by Jackson Friends Church if needed) and athletic shoes or rubber cleats. NO pants or shorts with belt loop holes are allowed. Shorts/pants with pockets will be taped (same can be said if someone is wearing pants with belt loops such as jeans). This is to avoid players fingers getting caught in loops/pockets.
- Rubber wristbands and any other jewelry deemed hazardous must be removed.
- If a jersey hangs over a player's shorts/flag belt, it will be asked to be tucked in. Also the remaining length of the flag belt after being put on should be tucked into one's shorts/pants or wrapped up around the flag belt.

## Penalties:

- The referee will call all penalties.
- Referees may use their own discretion for incidental contact, that would not result in a penalty. Coaches may ask for explanation, but no reverses on a judgement call.

- All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except for SPOT FOULS. All defensive SPOT penalties result in a first down.
- Any unsportsman like penalties, such as grabbing a players jersey to stop them on a big play or any pushing/shoving will result in a 5 minute benching penalty for that player, and the team will have to play down a player for those five minutes. If it happens twice in a game that player must sit out the rest of the game, but he may be replaced by another player in the game. Any future action may be taken by the league director.
- Games cannot end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines.
- If the distance to the goal is shorter than the penalty yardage, then the penalty will be assessed half the distance to the goal. Exception would be with defensive pass interference. Ball placed at the one yard line.
- NO BLOCKING/SCREENING IS ALLOWED. Players are not allowed to physically block or make contact with opponents on the line of scrimmage or down the field. Incidental contact is up to the referees discretion. Blocking will result in a 10 yard penalty from the spot and loss of down. Players may however run in front of the defense but cannot use hands or leaning their shoulders to block someone. DEFENSE CANNOT PUSH OFFENSIVE PLAYERS OUT OF THE WAY TO GET TO THE BALL CARRIER (this will result in a 5 yard penalty from the spot and a replay of down, if accepted by the offense).
- If a defensive player hits the QB's arm while throwing this is a 5 yard penalty and automatic first down. Defense may attempt to block a pass or go for QB's flags, but not try to intentionally hit QB's arm. Up to referee's discretion.

## Penalty Breakdowns

### Offensive Penalties:

#### 5 Yard Penalties from Line of Scrimmage & Loss of Down-

Illegal Forward Pass, Offensive Pass Interference, Impeding the Rusher, Taunting, Unsportsmanlike Conduct (10 yards)

#### 5 Yard Penalties from LOS, Replay Down:

Offsides/ False Start, Illegal Motion, Delay of Game (Back to Back is loss of down and clock stoppage), Illegal Procedure

#### 10 Yard Spot Foul Penalties & Loss of Down -

Blocking, Charging, Flag Guarding/Stiff Arm, Offensive Unnecessary Roughness

### Defensive Penalties:

#### 5 Yard Penalties from Line of Scrimmage & Automatic First Down:

Roughing the Passer, Taunting, Unsportsmanlike Conduct (10 yards)

#### 5 Yard Penalties from Line of Scrimmage & Replay Down:

Offside, Illegal Rush, Illegal Contact, Illegal Flag Pull, Stripping the Ball (spot foul + 5 yds)

#### Spot Fouls Automatic First Down:

Defensive Pass Interference, Defensive Holding, Unnecessary Roughness (+10 yds from spot)

### Live Ball / Dead Ball:

- To start a play the ball must be snapped by a center to the QB. QB CAN MUFF/DROP SNAP, pick it up and keeping playing, DEFENSE CANNOT cross the line of scrimmage. The ball may be snapped as hand-off/toss from the center to QB, if we have issues with snapping the ball (all levels K-6th). The center may run and catch or take a hand off at this point in any division.
- \*NEW RULE\* - IF when the QB hands the ball off to a running back (or another offensive player does a hand off to another player, ex. - double reverse) and the running back

drops the ball, it WILL NOT BE A DEAD BALL, but a live ball for them to pick up and keep running. Defense can cross the line of scrimmage at this point to pull flags. This is the ONLY time a fumble is not a dead ball (when it's an exchange between offensive players, behind the line of scrimmage on the initial play call).

- A minimum of four players must be on the field at all times, and a maximum of five (unless modified to 6 vs 6).
- Substitutions can be made at any dead ball.
- The ball is "dead" when there is an incomplete pass, a fumble NOT from an exchange between offensive players behind the line of scrimmage, a player running out of bounds, ball hits the ground, ballcarrier's flag is pulled, ballcarrier's knee hits ground, touchdown/PAT converted or missed. If a player who has the ball loses a flag without anyone pulling it or forcing it loose, it is one hand touch for the remainder of that play.

### Scoring:

- Touchdowns are worth 6 points. Extra points from the 5 yard line are worth 1 point, from the 10 yard line are worth 2 points.
- NO SAFETIES, ball will remain with offense, at the goalline. No points for run back on a PAT interception.

## DIVISION RULES BREAKDOWN

### K/1st & 2nd/3rd Grade Divisions

#### Passing:

- QB has seven seconds to throw the ball or hand it off. If the ball is NOT thrown or handed off in that time, the play is called dead, loss of down. Referee will count out loud the seven seconds.
- **QB cannot run the ball, EXCEPT for one play every set of four downs.** QB can hand off the ball and then receive a pass or hand off but until then cannot run past the line of scrimmage with the ball, other than one play every set of four downs.
- Passes by QB may be forward or backward but only one forward pass per play.
- NO laterals, pitches or screen passes BEYOND the line of scrimmage.
- If QB is "sacked" the ball is spotted at his most back foot. QB may throw the ball past the line of scrimmage to avoid a sack. But if a ball does not reach the line of scrimmage or goes out of bounds before reaching the line (in the air or ground) it will be treated as a sack.

#### Receiving:

- All players may receive a pass, including the center who snaps it and the QB. But the QB can only receive a pass once they have handed off the ball behind the LOS.
- Only one player is allowed in motion at a time.
- For a pass to be completed in bounds, a player must have at least one foot in.
- Once the ball is caught or advanced past the LOS, this player is the only player allowed with the ball until the play is dead. No Laterals or Handoffs.
- Once the ball carrier is past the LOS, players on offense may run with the ball carrier to screen but may not put their hands out to block a defender. Defenders MAY NOT push through offensive players to get ballcarrier's flag.

#### Running:

- The QB cannot run beyond the line of scrimmage with the ball, unless they have received a handoff after handing the ball off themselves, EXCEPT the one QB per four downs. **\*NO QB run on extra point attempts\***
- Teams may do direct handoffs or pitches behind LOS. Teams may perform multiple handoffs/pitches as long as they remain behind the LOS.
- The player who receives the handoff can throw the ball as long as he or she remains behind the line of scrimmage.
- The ball is spotted where the runner's back foot is when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is. There is no diving allowed, to try to advance the ball.
- Center sneak play is not allowed. The QB may not handoff the ball to the center on the first handoff of any play.

### **Rushing the Passer:**

- TEAMS GET ONE BLITZ PER FOUR DOWNS. Only ONE PLAYER may blitz, on the blitz play and they must be 7 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Before each play, an official will mark off 7 yards from the LOS.
- The blitzer has a clear path to the passer and any interference by the offense **by force of contact** will be considered a penalty (blocking). However an offensive player may try to make a player go around them by standing in front of the passer. No forced contact.
- If a blitzer leaves the rush line early (breaks the 7 yard area), the blitzer may return to the rush line, reset and then legally rush the passer (remember, one every four downs).
- Players not rushing the passer may defend on the line of scrimmage but may not enter the backfield unless the ball is handed off or thrown. EXCEPTION - players may cross the line of scrimmage IF the QB tucks the ball and start to run. Referees will watch for players trying to jump the LOS before the ball before eligible.
- Players rushing the passer may attempt to block the pass, however NO contact can be made with the QB in any way, or a 5 yard penalty and first down will be given.
- Teams can blitz on extra point conversions, but if they blitz, the QB can run.

### **Flag Pulling:**

- A legal flag pull takes place when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball. A defensive player may not pull the flags off of a player who does not have possession of the ball.
- Defenders CANNOT dive to pull a ball carriers flag, and cannot hold, tackle or run through the ball carrier when attempting to pull their flags.
- It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball carrier.
- Flag guarding is the attempt by the ball-carrier to obstruct the defender access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the hand, arm, shoulder or head or intentionally covering the flags with the football or jersey. Will result in a 10 yard penalty and loss of down.
- IF a ballcarrier's flag falls out on it's own, it goes to ONE HAND TAP for the remainder of that play.
- NO DIVING FOR AN OPPONENT'S FLAGS. WILL RESULT IN PENALTY IF A PLAYER DOES IT MORE THAN ONCE OR IF EGREGIOUS FIRST TIME.

**\*NO SCORE KEPT FOR K/1 DIVISION**

**\*NO BLITZ/QB RUN ON EXTRA POINTS**

**\*NO OVERTIME FOR 2nd/3rd GRADE DIVISIONS\***

**\*NO RUN ZONE RESTRICTIONS**

## 4th - 6th Grade Divisions

### Passing:

- QB has seven seconds to throw the ball or hand it off. If the ball is NOT thrown or handed off in that time, the play is called dead, loss of down. Referee will count out loud the seven seconds.
- QB cannot run the ball, EXCEPT once every set of four downs. QB can hand off the ball and then receive a pass or hand off but until then cannot run past the line of scrimmage with the ball, other than one play per set of four downs.
- Passes may be forward or behind LOS, but only one forward pass per play.
- Laterals/pitches are allowed on the field behind the LOS ONLY, EXCEPT in a team's last possession of the game or OT. At this time laterals are allowed beyond the LOS.
- If QB is "sacked" the ball is spotted at his most back foot. QB may throw the ball past the line of scrimmage to avoid a sack. But if a ball does not reach the line of scrimmage or goes out of bounds before reaching the line (in the air or ground) it will be treated as a sack.

### Receiving:

- All players may receive a pass, including the center who snaps it and the QB. But the QB can only receive a pass once they have handed off the ball behind the LOS.
- Only one player is allowed in motion at a time.
- For a pass to be completed in bounds, a player must have at least one foot in.
- Once the ball is caught or advanced past the LOS, this player is the only player allowed with the ball until the play is dead. No Laterals or Handoffs (except under 5 min in game/OT).
- Once the ball carrier is past the LOS, players on offense may run with the ball carrier to screen but may not put their hands out to block a defender. Defenders MAY NOT push through offensive players to get ball carrier's flag.

### Running:

- The QB cannot run beyond the line of scrimmage with the ball, unless they have received a handoff after handing the ball off themselves (other than one play per 4 downs). **\*NO QB run on extra point attempts\***
- Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Teams may perform multiple handoffs as long as they remain behind the LOS. No pitches/tosses. No laterals at any time during play, except on last possession in the game.
- The player who receives the handoff can throw the ball as long as he or she remains behind the line of scrimmage.
- The ball is spotted where the runner's back foot is when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is. There is no diving allowed, to try to advance the ball.
- Center sneak play is not allowed. The QB may not handoff the ball to the center on the first handoff of the play.

### NO RUN ZONES:

- "No Run Zones" are located 5 yards before midfield and 5 yards before the goal line in each offensive direction.
- If the ball is spotted on or inside the "No Run Zone," the offense MUST use a forward pass play to achieve a first down or touchdown. If you are in the no run zone but pushed back out of it because of a penalty, you may run the ball. Just not when the ball is set in the no run zone.

- Extra point attempts for 1 point at the 5 yard line, falls in the “No Run Zone”.

### **Rushing the Passer:**

- TEAMS GET ONE BLITZ PER FOUR DOWNS. Only ONE PLAYER may blitz, on the blitz play and they must be 7 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Before each play, an official will mark off 7 yards from the LOS.
- The blitzer has a clear path to the passer and any interference by the offense **by force of contact** will be considered a penalty (blocking). However an offensive player may try to make a player go around them by standing in front of the passer. No forced contact.
- If a blitzer leaves the rush line early (breaks the 7 yard area), the blitzer may return to the rush line, reset and then legally rush the passer (remember, one every four downs).
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- Defenders CAN NOT dive to pull a ballcarrier's flag, and cannot hold, tackle or run through the ball carrier when attempting to pull their flags.
- It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball carrier.
- Flag guarding is the attempt by the ball-carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the hand, arm, shoulder or head or intentionally covering the flags with the football or jersey. Will result in a 10 yard penalty and loss of down.
- IF a ballcarrier's flag falls out on it's own, they are down at the moment the flag falls out, unless they have a clear path to the touchdown and no one close to them. Up to the referee's discretion.
- NO DIVING FOR AN OPPONENT'S FLAGS. WILL RESULT IN PENALTY IF A PLAYER DOES IT MORE THAN ONCE OR IF EGREGIOUS FIRST TIME.

### **OVERTIME:**

- Overtime winner is determined by whichever team scores more points within a single overtime period. “No Run Rule” still in effect for 1 point conversions from the 5 yard line. No timeouts in Overtime.
- Away team will start with the ball first.
- Each team takes turns getting one (1) play from the defense's 5 yard line for one point or defense's 10 yard line for two points. Whether to go for one or two points is up to the offensive team. Whether or not the team that begins on offense converts, the team that started on defense gets a chance on offense to win or tie by converting a one- or two-point play of its own.
- If both teams score and complete the same amount of points on conversions, then the process is repeated with the team that started second on offense starting first this time. This process continues with teams alternating who starts first on offense. Both teams must “go for two” from the 10-yard line starting with the third round of overtime.
- Laterals are ALLOWED in OT for 4th-6th division.

**\*NO BLITZ OR QB RUNS ON EXTRA POINTS**