

Rules - Youth Flag Football 2026

We will use UHSAA Football rules for any rules that are not specifically listed in this document.

GENERAL RULES

- The field for 2nd-4th grades shall be 60yrd X 30yrd with two 10yrd end zones (80 yards total length), with a 5yrd safety zone down the middle. Dimensions for a 5th-9th grade field will be 80yrd x 40yrd with two 10yrd end zones (100 yards in total length), with a 10yrd safety zone down the middle for 6-9th grade, and a 5 yard safety zone for 5th grade.
- Each game will begin with a coin flip. The winning team will get to choose to receive the ball to start either in the first or second half. The losing team will choose what endzone they would like to defend in the first half. Teams will switch defending endzones after halftime.
- In recreation leagues we believe in equal and fair playing time. At a minimum a player must play at least $\frac{1}{2}$ of every game that they are in attendance. It is preferred that all players play at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of every game that they are in attendance.
- All players must have their shirts tucked in at all times. All players must be wearing their team issued jerseys or they will not be allowed to play.
- 2nd grade leagues will not have officials. Coaches will act as officials to enforce the rules and gametime.

CLOCK & TIMEOUTS

- A team has 2 timeouts per half. Timeouts from the first half will not carry over to the second half.
- A game will consist of two 20 min. halves, and a 5 min. halftime. The clock will not stop unless it is within 2 min. of the 2nd half. Within 2 min. of the 2nd halves the clock will stop on any dead ball situation according to UHSAA Football rules which is incompletions, penalties, first downs until the ball is spotted, and if the ball carrier runs out of bounds.
- 2nd grade leagues will have 15 minutes of practice time before two 15 min. halves and a 5 min. halftime period. The clock will not stop in this league except for timeouts.
- The play clock will be a 25 second play clock. On any change of possession, kickoffs and extra point attempts the play clock will be extended to 40 seconds.
 - 2nd grade leagues the play clock and delay of game penalties will not be called unless a team is excessive in their use of time between plays. Keep the game moving. Call plays quickly.

SCORING

- Touchdown = 6 points
- Extra Point 5 yard line = 1 point
- Extra Point 10 yard line = 2 points
- Safety = 2 points
- Interception returned for a TD on any extra point attempt = 2 points

GAMEPLAY

1. Each team will have 7 players on the field at a time. 7-9th grade leagues will have 8 players on the field at a time. The offense must have a center snap the ball between their legs or from the side. On a snap the ball must be touching the ground at the beginning of the snap. 5 players are required to play the game without a forfeit, 6 players for the 7-9th grade league. 2nd grade leagues will have no forfeits.
2. All players, even the center, are eligible to receive a pass.
3. The game will be played with flags provided by Spanish Fork Parks & Recreation. A player is down wherever their flag is pulled and the ball is spotted. If a flag falls off without being pulled the ball carrier will be considered down based on one (1) hand touch.
4. Metal Cleats are NOT allowed.
5. Each team will have 4 downs to get past the next 20 yard mark on the field for a first down. If failed on 4th down the opposing team will be awarded the ball at that spot. In 2nd-4th grade leagues it will be the next 15 yard mark.
6. **Blocking**, a player must block with a closed fist and may not fully extend their arms. Players can extend their arms at a 90 degree angle at the maximum, and may not extend their arms out past their shoulders. A player may not hold a defender's jersey or or body part as they are blocking. Offensive and defensive players must attempt to remain standing while blocking. There are no chop blocks or cutting. If this occurs it will be a 10 yard penalty from the spot of the foul, replay down.
7. No shoving is permitted while blocking. If this occurs it will be a personal foul 15 yard penalty. If a player receives 2 personal fouls in a game they will be ejected from the remainder of the game.
8. **Downfield blocking** will be treated like a basketball screen. If major contact occurs officials will be taught to call it like a block, charge call in basketball and be asked to determine which player had positioning first before contact was made, players do not have to come set like in basketball on a block/charge and may be moving. An illegal block will be a 10 yard penalty from the spot of the foul and a replay of down.
9. **Defensive Rushing the QB**. No more than 2 defensive players may rush the QB at the time of the snap. 7-9th grade leagues may have 3 defensive players rush the QB at the time of the snap. No defensive rushers may line up over the center and rush. All defensive rushers must rush outside the safety zone until they cross the offensive line of scrimmage, after a defensive

rusher crosses the line of scrimmage they may go inside the safety zone. After the ball is handed off, or the QB crosses the offensive line of scrimmage any defensive player may cross the defensive line of scrimmage to pull the runners flag. In 2nd grade leagues there will be no rushing of the QB. The defense may cross the offensive line of scrimmage anytime there is a hand off or a play action attempt.

10. **Rushing**, No rushing up the middle by the offense. All runners must stay to the outside of the safety zone until they cross the defensive line of scrimmage, after they have crossed the defensive line of scrimmage they may enter the safety zone. If a runner runs up the middle it will be a 5 yard penalty from the original line of scrimmage and replay down.

- To be considered a pass and not a rush any throw attempt must go beyond the offensive line of scrimmage or else it will be considered a running play and must follow the rushing rules in reference to the safety zone.

11. **Rules of the ball carrier**: The ball carrier must use agility and not power to avoid their flag being pulled. There is no trucking, hurdling, stiff arms, or lowering the shoulder by the ball carrier. This will result in a 10 yard penalty from the spot of the foul.

12. Players may stretch the ball forward to achieve a first down or touchdown, but **NO DIVING** is permitted by an offensive player at any point in the game. Diving will result in a 10 yard penalty from the spot of the foul.

13. **Flag Guarding**: The ball carrier cannot protect his flags by blocking, guarding, hacking, or holding flags with arms or hands so his opponent cannot pull or remove his flag. Flag Guarding will result in a penalty of 15 yards from the spot of the foul.

14. A defender may not hold, push, or knock down the ball carrier to get his flag. A defender also may not attempt to strip or punch the ball out from the ball carrier. Penalty: 10 yards from the spot of the foul. If in the judgment of the official, the ball carrier would have scored a touchdown, a touchdown shall be awarded.

15. **Fumbles** will be considered a dead ball and will be downed where the fumble occurs, with the offense retaining possession. A team can not fumble the ball forward to gain a first down or Touchdown, if this happens the ball will be placed at the spot of the ball carrier where the fumble occurred.

16. **Kickoffs**, we will have kickoffs to start each half of the game and after every touchdown scored. Kickoffs will be from the 20 yard line. In 2nd-4th grade the kickoff will be from midfield. If the ball rolls into the endzone it will be deemed a touchback and the ball will be placed on the 20 yard line.

17. **Punting** is allowed on 4th down. If a team punts nobody on the offense or defense will move until the ball is kicked. No fake punts, if you declare your punting you have to punt. A touchback will occur if the ball enters the endzone.

18. **Teaching the game.** One coach and only one coach is allowed on the playing field at a time for each team. We encourage the youth to call the plays in all grades. In 5th and 6th the coaches must be off the field by the 4th game. In 7th- 9th grade the coaches are never permitted on the field. Coaches on the field are not allowed to call out instruction during plays. Let your defense and/or offense learn to read and react to the offense and/or defense. This game is for the kids, please let them play it and have fun! In 2nd grade leagues you can have two coaches on the field at a time per team. One coach acting as the official and the other coach helping manage their players and the game.

OVERTIME

- Overtime will start with a coin toss for teams to decide if they would like to start on offense or defense.
- Each team will start at the 5-yard line and have 1 play to score. Teams will have alternating possessions and repeat the process until we have a winner. (Whoever started on offense during the first overtime period will start on defense for the second overtime period. That rotation will continue until we have a winner.)
- 2nd grade leagues will have no overtime as there are no league standings or post season tournament.

Other UHSAA penalties to review (This does not include all penalties that may be called, but highlights some of the most commonly called penalties.)

- Illegal Formation, 5 yard penalty (4 players line up on the line of scrimmage, 3 off the line at the time of the snap)
- Offsides Offensive/Defensive, 5 yard penalty
- False Start, 5 yard penalty
- Delay of game, 5 yard penalty
 - 25 second play clock after the ball is spotted, 40 second play clock after the ball is spotted on a change of possession.
 - 2nd grade leagues will not have a play clock
- Holding, 10 yard penalty
- Defensive Holding, 10 yard penalty
- Pass interference Defensive/Offensive, 15 yard penalty
- Illegal touching, 5 yard penalty
- Unsportsmanlike conduct, 15 yard penalty