



MEDFORD TOWNSHIP DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION



FLAG FOOTBALL RULES 2008

The goal of this program is to provide young players a fun and exciting opportunity to engage in non-contact, continuous action while learning lessons in teamwork.

The NFL FLAG Football program is designed to educate young people about football while emphasizing participation and sportsmanship. Players learn skills and lessons that help them succeed both on and off the field.

MEDFORD TOWNSHIP FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

JUNIOR LEAGUE (LEAGUE B) RULES

FORMAT RULES:

Initial / Second Half Possession - Referee will conduct a coin toss with player representatives from each team to determine possession and direction teams are scoring and defending. Winner of coin toss will start on offense first. Loser determines which goal they are defending. Team who lost the coin toss in first half will start with the second half on offense and field direction will be reversed. Offensive team takes possession on own 5-yard line.

Coaches on Field - Only 1 coach is permitted to be on the field to organize huddles, call offensive and defensive plays. Once players are set in their position coaches are strongly encouraged to let the play develop through the player's actions and player may not be physically directed by a coach. Each grade level may decide to not allow coaches at some point during the season as determined by the grade coordinator in consultation with other coaches.

Length of Game - 44 minutes with 2 halves of equal length. The referees on the field are keeping time. Continuously running clock up to 2-minute warning. After 2-minute warning, the clock stops on incomplete passes, changes of possession, ball carrier stepping out of bounds and touchdowns. Clock does not run during extra point plays in final two minutes. Clock does not run during the time it takes to administer a penalty but will resume once referee places ball on ground if previous play was not an incomplete pass or out of bounds run or if time out has not been called. "Spiking" of ball is permitted to stop clock in final 2 minutes. Half time last 5 minutes.

Play Clock - Offensive team has 40 seconds to call and start a play from the time the referee places the ball on the field in preparation for the next play. [PENALTY: Loss of five yards from the spot of the ball and loss of down for offense.

Time-outs - Each team will have 2 sixty (60) second time-outs each half. Referees may use their discretion to stop the clock for injuries, disruptions, unsportsmanlike conduct, etc. Note: Sideline huddles with entire team are not permitted in between plays unless a time out is called.

Overtime - Overtime is limited to tournament games only. Regular season games will end if tie at the expiration of time. Overtime format is as follows: Each team is given opportunity to score from the 20 yard line (5 yds closer than midfield to the goal line). Coin toss determine first possession (choice). Loser of coin toss determines which goal to defend. Note: Each team is required to score in the same direction. Team that scores more points in a particular round wins.

Players on Field - Each team can field a maximum of five players on the field but is allowed to play with a minimum of four. When one team only has four players the team with more than four players is still allowed to have five players on the field at any given time.

Attire - Cleats are allowed but not mandatory (no metal spikes). Mouth guards are required. All players must have shirts out at all time in order to prevent shirt from covering belt loop. Belt loop must be completely exposed and not twisted or shortened in any way.

Scoring - Touchdown = 6 points / Extra Point starts on 5 yard line with 2 points for pass and 1 point for run. / Safety = 2 points and possession starting on own 5 yard line. Note: Defense can not score points from interceptions on extra point. Interception on extra point results in end of extra point attempt only.

All Players “Start” - No team will consist of more than ten players ensuring that every player must “start” on either offense or defense. Every player who appears for a game should be on the field for a minimum of 50% of the time.

Fair Playing Time /Ball Distribution - If you have seven or more players, then no player is allowed to play every down. In addition, the ball should be distributed fairly among players. No player should run or catch the ball on every down.

Sportsmanship / Roughing - If the referee witnesses any flagrant 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. Furthermore “trash talking” is not acceptable. Referee has the right to determine if a player is using offensive language or making unsportsmanlike comments. (Trash talk is talk that may be offensive to officials, opposing players, teams, or spectators.) If referee has determined “trash talking” has occurred, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.

Coaches Sportsmanship Guide - Coaches should limit the damage in a lopsided game. Lopsided winning coaches should utilize the weaker players and throw short hook passes in the middle of the field to limit gains. Lopsided winning coaches should not use halfback passes or fake pass/delayed runs. Lopsided winning coaches should play man to man defense to open up large yardage possibilities.

GAME RULES:

1st Downs -The offensive team will have 4 plays to cross mid field. Once a team crosses mid field it has 4 plays to score a touch down.

Change of Possession - All possession changes with the exception of interceptions start on the offense’s five yard line. Possession changes on interceptions start at the location where the defender who is returning the interception had his/her flag pulled. Defenders may return interceptions that occur in the endzone without possibility of safety. Defenders who intercept in the endzone and are tackled in the endzone will have their offensive possession on the five yard line. Note: Defenders who intercept the ball outside the endzone and take the ball into the endzone as part of their return are subject to be tackled in the endzone and, if tackled their team will be charged with a safety.

Kickoff – There are no kickoffs. Team selected to receive starts first possession on their own 5-yard line.

Punts – There are no punts. Failure of a team to cross midfield or score while on offense transfers possession to the opponents, at the opponent’s 5-yard line.

Center Snap – Ball must be snapped directly from a player on the line (I.e. center) to the quarterback. Snap can be a direct hand off, underhand toss, traditional snap through the legs, shotgun or direct snap. Center may “straddle” the ball for the side toss. All snaps must start with the ball on the ground.

Fumbles - If a player loses control of the ball and it hits the ground at any time (snap, run, interception return) the ball is dead and the play is over at the location the runner dropped the ball.

Rush Count / Defensive Off-Sides - Defensive team must wait for the referee to finish “rush count” of 5 seconds before crossing the line of scrimmage. [PENALTY: 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and repeat down or accept results of the play.]

Handoffs / Laterals – Handoffs are when 2 players are in contact with the ball simultaneously. Handoffs only permitted to players behind the runner and behind the line of scrimmage. Centers are not eligible for running plays unless they run behind. QB may not run directly over line of scrimmage after receiving snap and must either hand off the ball or pass. Laterals are not permitted. [PENALTY: Loss of 5 yards and loss of down.]

Offsides / Players in Motion - Offense may not cross the line of scrimmage until the center snaps the ball. Only one player is permitted to be in motion at the time of the snap. The player in motion may not be advancing toward the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped. [PENALTY: Loss of 5 yards.]

Formations - Only center needs to be in a set position. All other offensive players may be either on the line of scrimmage or in the backfield.

Run-Pass Mix / No Run Zones – Running and passing plays are permitted on any down except when the offensive team is within five (5) yards of the midfield or within five (5) yards of the goal line. Coaches are encouraged to teach and use both running and passing plays. [Exception: Passing is an option for 1st graders...they do not have the “No Run Zone”]

Passes - Player must have at least one foot in bounds to make completion. All passes must be forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage. Any pass caught at or behind the line of scrimmage. [PENALTY: Loss of 5 yards.]

Flag Guarding – Runner may not prohibit access to his/ her belt loop in any fashion. No flag guarding, stiff-arming or steam rolling. [PENALTY: Loss of 5 yards from the infraction and loss of down.]

Blocking - Offense may not block or use an intentional “moving pick” to prevent a defender from getting to the ball carrier. [Penalty: Loss of 5 yards from the infraction and loss of down.]

Tackling - Runner is down when defender pulls belt off or if referee determines runner’s belt loop was in the grasp of defender or if belt loop is inaccessible to the defender. Spinning is allowed.

Illegal Tackling - Defender must avoid direct contact with runner and may only contact runner if making specific attempt to grasp belt loop. Defender may not hold jersey of runner in order to slow down runner to grasp belt loop, nor can defender pre-maturely grasp belt loop before offensive player has the ball. [PENALTY: 5 yards from the infraction and repeat down or accept the result of the play.]

Holding- Defense may not grab and hold any offensive player. [PENALTY: 5 yards from the infraction and repeat down or accept the result of the play.]

Defensive Pass Interference - Defender may not have any intentional or significant unintentional contact with offensive receiver while ball is in air. [PENALTY: 5 yards from the infraction and repeat down or accept result of the play.]

Offensive Pass Interference - Offensive receivers must not push off defender at any time during play. [PENALTY: Loss of 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down.]

Intentional Grounding – Offensive player can not intentionally ground ball to avoid being sacked by defensive players. Passes must be directed toward another offensive player who is over the line of scrimmage. Referees on the field will make judgment call on whether ball was intended for a receiver or not. Note: Immediately “spiking” the ball to stop the clock during the final two minutes of each half is permitted.

JUNIOR LEAGUE (LEAGUE A) RULES

FORMAT RULES:

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Coaches on Field - For weeks 1 & 2 only, 1 coach is permitted to be on the field to organize huddles, call offensive and defensive plays. Once players are set in their position coaches are strongly encouraged to let the play develop through the player's actions and player may not be physically directed by a coach. Each grade level may decide to not allow coaches at some point during the season as determined by the grade coordinator in consultation with other coaches. Starting Week 3 no coaches are permitted on the field unless time out is called.

Length of Game - 44 minutes with 2 halves of equal length. The referees on the field are keeping time. Continuously running clock up to 2-minute warning. After 2-minute warning, the clock stops on incomplete passes, changes of possession, ball carrier stepping out of bounds and touchdowns. Clock does not run during extra point plays in final two minutes. Clock does not run during the time it takes to administer a penalty but will resume once referee places ball on ground if previous play was not an incomplete pass or out of bounds run or if time out has not been called. "Spiking" of ball is permitted to stop clock in final 2 minutes. Half time last 5 minutes.

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Flag Guarding – Runner may not prohibit access to his/ her belt loop in any fashion. No flag guarding, stiff-arming or steam rolling. [PENALTY: Loss of 5 yards from the infraction and loss of down.] Meaning no replay of down.

Blocking - Offense may not block or use an intentional “moving pick” to prevent a defender from getting to the ball carrier. [Penalty: Loss of 5 yards from the infraction and loss of down.]

Tackling - Runner is down when defender pulls belt off or if referee determines runner’s belt loop was in the grasp of defender or if belt loop is inaccessible to the defender. Spinning is allowed.

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