



## **2023 NJAYF FLAG FOOTBALL RULES**

*NOTE: The rules listed below supersede all other Flag football rules.*

### **PRE-GAME BOOK CHECK**

All participants are required to go to the designated area, line up in book order / JERSEY NUMBER ORDER so opposing coaches can compare players with pictures in the player book.

### **INTRODUCTION**

- A.** Thank you for volunteering your time to participate in your town's Flag Football Program. You may not realize it, but what you are doing will leave a lasting impression on your players that will hold onto for quite possibly the rest of their lives. You are taking the opportunity to not just teach them the game of football, but also be a positive role model, to teach them behaviors and values that will help mold the person they will grow to become.
- B.** As coaches and volunteers, we have to remember that the children participating in Flag Football are 5 & 6 year olds. This is their first introduction to playing the game in an organized format.
- C.** This is NOT A COMPETITIVE division. It is an INSTRUCTIONAL division. The purpose is to teach the players the basic fundamentals of football, to teach them the concept of respect and good sportsmanship, and most importantly, to allow them to have FUN.
- D.** This is meant to be a Positive experience and activity for the players.
- E.** No scores are to be kept.
- F.** There are no declared winners or losers.
- G.** Every player is to be respectful and complimentary towards not only their own coaches, teammates and parents, but also the opposing coaches, teammates and parents.
- H.** Every player is to be given fair playing time.
- I.** Every player should be given equal opportunity to touch the ball.
- J.** No child will leave the game excited if they played 12 snaps and spent their entire time blocking. However, a couple of hand-offs as the RB, or a chance to play QB for a few snaps, can change their entire experience, regardless of whether or not they gained yards, successfully completed a pass or scored a touchdown. It is those moments that will help build a child's love of the game. This is their first impression of the sport and will ultimately decide whether they move forward to play in the higher levels and help build a strong football program in your community, or leave the sport altogether.
- K.** Remember, no scores are being kept and there are no winners or losers. There is absolutely no incentive to give your best player(s) the ball every single play, as far too many coaches unfortunately do at this level.
- L.** As is stated above, this is an informative division and EVERY PLAYER should be played regularly at EVERY POSITION.
- M.** We want to emphasize the importance of fitness and health by devoting a portion of each practice (and or prior to each game) to exercise and conditioning. Furthermore, we need to use our influence as a coach and role model to impress upon the children the importance of being active, even when they're not at a field.
- N.** If your coaches cannot abide by the rules and have a "WINNING AT ALL COSTS MENTALITY", then this league is

not for them and those coaches will be removed from the game and the team will be removed from the schedule.

- . Remember it's about the kids and building the foundation of your organization in which these kids will be playing from Flag to 14U.

## **RULES OF THE GAME**

First as coaches & volunteers we have to remember that at this age group, our players are ages 5 and 6 years old. The game is about instructing the **BASICS** of the fundamentals of football and having **FUN**.

- No scores are to be kept
- We want the parents and players to be respectful to the opposing team (including their parents and coaches).
- We want to emphasize to the players, coaches and parents good sportsmanship type of behavior.

Individuals called "Assignors" will draft schedules for a particular region. The game times/day are NOT determined by NJAYF. Upon completion of game dates and times, a thorough schedule will be sent from the Assignor of the region.

Remember this is **NOT** about winning and losing, this is for the kids to have fun and continue through the organization

## **NUMBER OF PLAYERS**

Each team shall have a maximum of 24 player or a minimum of 10 on their roster

## **MANDATORY PLAY RULE (MPR)**

- All players must play a minimum of 12 plays
- No one player may Quarterback or Running Back the entire game. Each player on the roster must have one (1) play at quarterback and running back in each game

The FREE substitution rules is always in effect and a player may enter the game ANYTIME after the play is dead

Coaches should discuss rules with opposing coaches prior to the beginning of the game

Coaches should always act in a positive manner

- Yelling or belittling the kids is unacceptable
- This is instructional

A Coach may not direct a player while the play is in motion.

- Once the players leave the huddle, the coach may not reengage with the players until the play is over

Coaches on the Field:

- Two (2) coaches from each team are permitted to be on the field during the game

Defense:

- While on Defense, the coaches should be line up as follows:
- One (1) coach behind the Safety and one (1) watching the Defensive Line

Offense:

- While on Defense, the coaches should be line up as follows:
- One (1) coach behind the Backfield and one (1) watching the Offensive Line

## REFEREES

- The home team supplies the referees for the game(s)
- Each game is to have 2 referees on the field
- The referees must be 16 years of age or older
- In order to avoid / reduce conflicts, it is extremely important that the referees know the rules

## FIELD PARTICIPANTS

There are no other field participants allowed on the field or sidelines.

Parents are **NOT ALLOWED** on the sideline or field during games unless authorized by the organization Board Member(s) or Head Coach.

- Parents may be allowed on field if authorized if their son or daughter is injured / sick and needs to be removed from the field.

## Head Coach Responsibility

- The Head Coach of the team is responsible for the players, coaching staff and those in the stands.

## EQUIPMENT

The players must wear the following **MANDATORY** equipment:

- Athletic protector (i.e. Cup)
- Mouthpiece (cannot be clear or white)
- Cleats recommended but not needed. Appropriate footwear should be worn (i.e.. Sneakers)

Players are **NOT PERMITTED** to wear the following equipment during gameplay:

- Knee Pads, Thigh Pads, Hip Pads, Arm Pads, Shoulder Pads
- **NO PADS of ANY KIND**

Player Jerseys **MUST** be tucked into their shorts/pants. Jersey are not allowed to cover the flags at any time.

## FLAGS

The Flag color should not match the game jersey or the shorts/pants being worn. They must be in contrast to the uniform.

- Flags must be VELCRO,
- Flags that are suction cup style are NOT PERMITTED
- Flags cannot be of a clear material
- Flags worn should be between a length of 14-20 inches and a minimum of 2 inches wide
- Flags cannot be tied to the players belt and/or other parts of the players uniform
- The ends of the flags cannot be tucked into a players uniform
- The ends of the flags cannot be cut to a 45 degree angle

Please Note: When flag belts are new, they need to be checked that the flags are not secured to the belt. The flags may be affixed for shipping purposes. Make sure the flags can be pulled off. See images on next page



## GAME

The game duration of play is 1 hour (60 minutes)

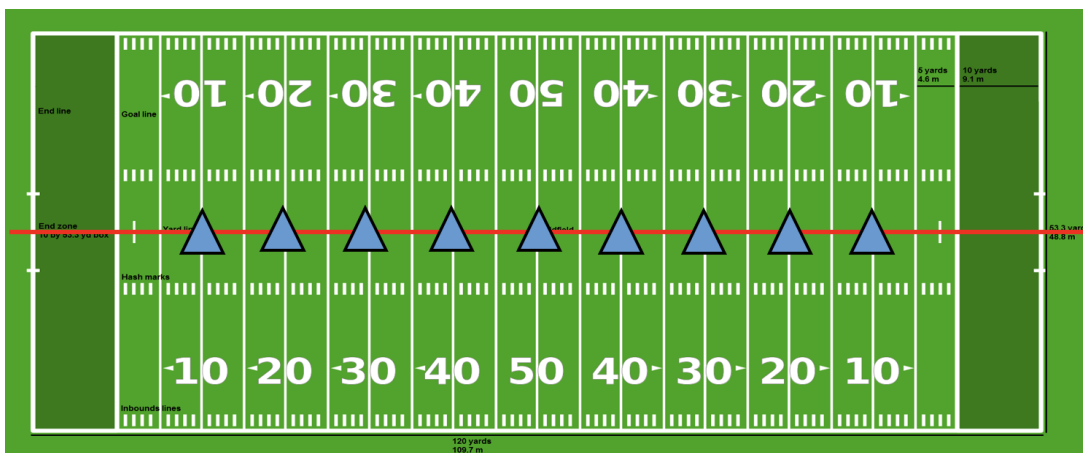
Two **25 minute** halves with a running clock

- 30 seconds will be allowed between plays
- If your team uses a playbook, be aware that there is a time limit for the game and the more time spent in the huddle / going over a playbook, the less time the kids will have to play the game.
- Learning the plays should occur during practice not during the game
- Please try to maintain the game time at a steady pace so the kids get as much time as possible
- A referee should maintain the pace of the game reminding the coaches of time
- Each team will be permitted to have one (1) time out per half
- Half Time is reserved for the Flag Cheerleaders to perform
- Try to have the games start on time, as they are usually the first games of the day. If they run over, it will affect the remainder of the day's schedule of games.

## PLAYING FIELD

The field is to be divided as follows:

- The field is to be split down the middle goal post to goal post
- By splitting the field down the middle, it will allow 2 games to be played at the same time
- The 2 fields should be separated by cones.
- Once the field is split , the field to be used is 80 yards. With two 10 yard end zones.



## GAME PLAY

After each play, the ball goes to the center has mark on the field

- Center of the playing field

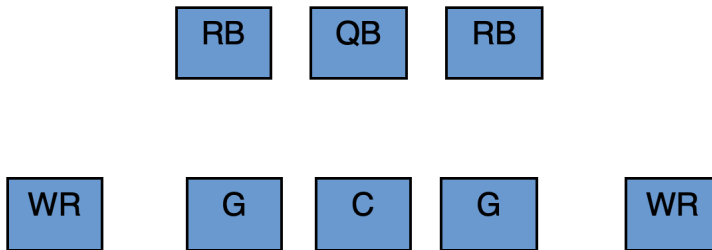
At the start of the game, the ball and after a touchdown is scored the ball is to be placed at the 30 yard line from the opposing end zone.

There is no punting

- If a Punt is declared on 4th down, the ball goes to the 30 yard line from the opposing end zone.
- Alternative: if a team is on their own goal line and does not make a first down, the ball goes to the 30 yard line from the opposing end zone.

If a player's flag is ripped off in the backfield, the ball **MUST** be placed back to the original line of scrimmage. **DO NOT** place the ball and move the down marker to the spot of the flag being ripped off. We do not want to discourage the kids when playing.

### POSITIONS REFERENCE – OFFENSE



### POSITIONS – OFFENSE

Offense must have 5 players on the line of scrimmage & 3 Players in the backfield

Offensive Line:

- Must consist of the Center and Guards (2)
- **Blocking:**
  - A blocker can block an opponent by using their hands **ONLY**
  - **NO using shoulders or elbows to block opponent**
- No unbalanced lines are permitted
- The 3 linemen are not eligible to carry and / or receive the ball
- The Center is the only lineman permitted to be in a 3 point stance

### GAME PLAY

One (1) fumbled snap per 4 downs.

- Meaning the first fumble counts as a play
- Any fumbles after this point does not count as 1 of the 4 plays
- A fumble is defined as when a player drops the ball and it hits the ground and the ball is not recovered in a continuous manner.
- If a player fumbles the ball and recovers it in a continuous motion then the play should be allowed to continue. This is based on not wanting to stop play and allowing the players to play as much as they can for the duration of the game.

If a team is ahead by 3 touchdowns / scores, the other team maintains possession of the ball until they have scored

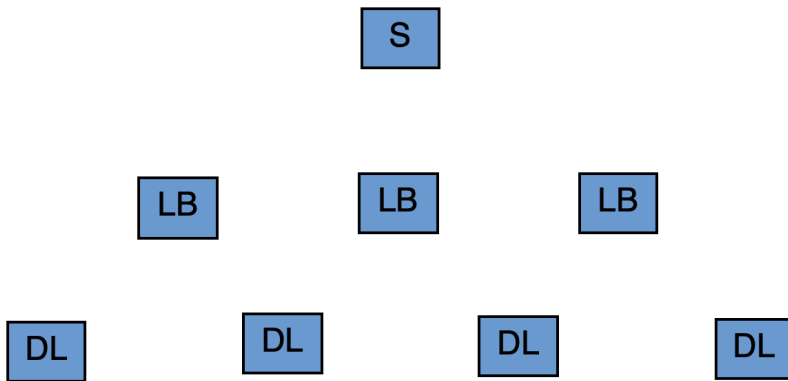
The Offense is not allowed to perform a silent snap count.

Quarterback:

- The Quarterback must hand the ball off to the running back or must pass it to a receiver.
- Quarterback Keepers as allowed under the following conditions:
- QB must fake a handoff before running the ball
- QB CANNOT run up the middle, QB must run outside the tackles
- QB Keeper can only be run once by each player. If you continue to run the QB Keeper throughout the game, you must rotate the QB each time you run it. Again, each player can only run it once and the QB MUST fake a handoff

**No flag guarding or stiff arming allowed at this level of play**

#### POSITIONS REFERENCE – DEFENSE



#### POSITIONS – DEFENSE

Defensive Line:

- The defensive line must consist of 4 players
- 2 players lined up over the Guards
- 2 players lined up on the Ends/Receivers
- No one is to lineup over the Center

The Defense can select the defensive formation. The defense can have the remaining 4 players line up as Linebacker or Safety.

These 4 players must be aligned 5 yards off the line of scrimmage.

Everyone on the Defense wears flags EXCEPT the 2 defensive linemen

There is no goal line defense. The players line up in their normal positions

Defensive Notes:

- Defensive Linemen
- The 2 interior defensive linemen are allowed to rush the quarterback
- They are to be lined HEAD UP over the Guards and are NO ALLOWED TO SHOOT THE GAPS

- They must engage / make contact with the Guard first.

Quarterback / Running Back Engagement:

- The defensive players are allowed to engage with the QB or RB when they break outside of the tackle or the line of scrimmage. If the QB stays in the pocket, the defensive player may not remove the flag until they run outside the tackle or pass the line of scrimmage. We want the play to develop.

**If you have any questions, please contact:**

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*For any issues pertaining to schedule or opponents, please contact your organization Flag Commissioner or Football Commissioner. Any flag football issues that need to be elevated to NJAYF, please contact the NJAYF Flag Football Commissioner, Chad Seyler.*