



WILLIAMSON COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION

Youth Flag Football Rules

Updated: 11/18/2024

The following local rules and procedures are in addition to, or in lieu of, rules and procedures stated in the NFL Youth Flag Football Program and Williamson County Parks & Recreation. Please refer to www.nflyouthfootball.com for other rule interpretations.

Eligibility and Conduct

1. The date that is to be used to determine players playing age shall be **August 31, 2024**. This includes the FALL 2024 and SPRING 2025 seasons.
2. Each player must furnish a birth certificate.
3. Any player who meets the age requirements is eligible to play.
4. The head coach is allowed to be on the field, but the assistant coaches must remain in their designated player box or be subjected to a delay of game penalty. All coaches must sign and pass a background check to be eligible to stand on the sideline. **Teams will be allowed one head coach and one assistant coach on the bench during games except for 6U. 6U will be allowed to have two coaches on the field to help manage.**
5. Any player or coach receiving two warnings for unsportsmanlike conduct during a single game will be ejected from the current game and receive a one game suspension. They must also leave the property immediately on the second infraction. This suspension will be enforced in the next scheduled game. Any player or coach receiving a total of three unsportsmanlike conduct penalties will be suspended for the remainder of the season, including the postseason tournament.
6. Any player or coach participating in a violent act, such as fighting, biting, kicking, swinging at another player, etc., shall be permanently dismissed from the league. Any spectator involved in fighting will be immediately removed from the facility. In addition, the involved parties will be suspended from all recreational leagues and facilities indefinitely. **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.**
7. Trash-talking and taunting will not be tolerated.
8. Any player or coach under the influence of alcohol or any other illegal drug, participating in any game or practice, shall be dismissed from the league immediately.

The Basics

1. All age groups will play 6 v 6.
2. A coin toss determines first possession. The assigned visitor team will call the coin toss.

3. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 3-yard line and has four plays to cross midfield for a first down. Once a team crosses midfield, it has four plays to score a touchdown. On the fourth down the offense may elect to go for it or punt. Teams will be allowed to throw or punt the ball on the 4th down. The receiving team will be allowed to catch the ball without interference. If a catch is not made the ball will be played where it comes to a stop on its own power. The punt returner can not return the punted ball.
4. Interceptions may be returned, **including extra point conversions. The defense will be rewarded two (2) points if they score on an intercepted extra point conversion.**
5. Teams change sides after the half. Possession changes to loser of coin toss unless deferred.
6. The 5-6 and 7-8 will use a Pee-Wee size football. The 9-10 will use a junior size football. The 11-13 will use a Youth size football.
7. Flags used on games will be Triple Threat flag football belts provided by WCPR.

Players/Game Schedules

1. Teams must field a minimum of five players at the start of the game.
2. Each player must play at least 2 quarters. Coaches will have to sub in players at the 5 minute mark. Any player on the bench must sub in at this time.
3. ALL FACILITY/ PARK/ARENA RULES MUST BE FOLLOWED.
4. Players CANNOT change teams and are only allowed to play for one team once the season starts unless approved by the WCPR Staff.
5. All players must be dressed in proper uniform attire at game time.
6. All jerseys must be tucked in.
7. Shorts with pockets and belt loops are prohibited.
8. Mouth guards are REQUIRED. Players will not be allowed on the field without one.
9. No cleats or spikes of any kind are allowed. Players may wear indoor soccer shoes.
10. No spitting in the arena.

Timing/Overtime

1. All games will start on time according to the published schedule. First games will have a grace period of five minutes. Five minutes will be put on the clock at the scheduled start time. It will be declared a forfeit when time has expired if one or both teams aren't available for play. NO EXCEPTIONS.
2. The games will consist of four, ten minute quarters. The clock runs continuously except for injury or timeouts until the last 30 seconds of the 4th quarter. The clock will then stop for any dead ball. Extra points attempted during this time will be untimed. A dead ball will be considered as:
 - incomplete pass
 - play going out of bounds
 - change of possession
 - first down or a score.
 - penalty on the defense
3. Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball.

4. In the last 5 minutes of the 4th quarter if a delay-of-game penalty is called, the clock will stop until the next play is started at the snap of the ball and the offense will lose the down.
5. Each team has three timeouts per half. Unused timeouts will not roll over to the second half.
6. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
7. In overtime, the ball will be placed at the 3 yard line. Both teams will have 4 downs to score. After a touchdown an extra point must be attempted. The extra point will be used as a tie break for teams scoring on same number of tries. The team that scores in the least number of tries will be declared the winner.
 - a. If both teams score on the same number of tries and have the same result with the extra point, then the process will repeat with the team that started on defense starting on offense. If a team fails to win after a second overtime the ball will be placed at the 10 yard line. This process will continue until a winner is decided.
 - b. Only playoff games will have an overtime period if necessary. Regular season games will remain a tie.

Mercy Rule

Once a team has gone up by more than 28 points, no points will be added to the scoreboard until the team that is down has scored. In that case, the team that is up will also receive any additional points they might have scored. Teams up by more than 28 points are only permitted to run the football (unless inside the “no rush zones”.) Violation of this rule will result in an Unsportsmanlike Conduct Penalty.

Scoring

Touchdown:

6 points

Extra Point:

1 point (played from 3-yard line “pass only”) or

2 points (played from 10-yard line)

If a team scores at the end of regulation and the extra point attempt is not necessary to decide the game, there will be NO extra point attempt.

Safety:

2 points

The ball will be spotted at offensive 10 yard line

Running

1. The quarterback cannot run with the ball.
2. Running plays may include backward laterals, pitches, or direct handoffs; as long as they are behind the line of scrimmage.
 - a. “Center sneak” play is no longer allowed. The QB is not allowed to handoff to the center on the first handoff of the play.
3. Offense may use multiple handoffs.

4. “No-running zones” located three yards from each end zone and three yards on either side of midfield. They are designed to avoid short-yardage, power-running situations. If the ball is spotted in these boundaries, they must advance the ball by using a pass play.
 - a. If there is an offensive penalty that pushes the offense back outside of the three yard “no run zone”, the offense is still required to pass.
5. The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
6. Once the ball has been handed off, or the pass has been completed behind the line of scrimmage all defensive players are eligible to rush.
7. Spinning is allowed, but player cannot dive to advance the ball.
8. The ball is spotted where the ball is when the flag is pulled
Note: There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground or the forward progress of the runner.
9. Absolutely NO laterals or pitches of any kind allowed beyond the line of scrimmage.
10. Runners shall not flag guard by using any part of the body or ball to deny the opportunity for an opponent to pull or remove the flag belt. Flag guarding includes but is not limited to:
 - Swinging the hand or arm over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from pulling their flag.
 - Placing the ball in possession over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from pulling their flag.
 - Lowering the shoulders in such a manner that flag guards.
 - Jumping will be ruled as an attempt to flag guard. Spins, hesitation steps and jukes from side to side are permitted, but jumping/hurdling off the ground in attempt to avoid a flag pull will be penalized.

Blocking

1. THIS IS A NO CONTACT LEAGUE.
2. Screen blocking is permitted. No moving screens (basketball screen applies).
 - a. The offensive screen block shall take place without contact.
 - b. The screen blocker shall have their hands and arms at their side, below their waist, or behind their back.
 - c. Any use of the arms, elbows, legs, or body to initiate contact during an offensive player's screen block is illegal.
 - d. A blocker may use his/her hand or arm to break a fall or to retain his/her balance.
 - e. A player must be on his/her feet before, during, and after screen blocking.

Note: Once the offensive player with the ball advances beyond the line of scrimmage (run or pass), all other offensive players must stop. This is to prevent downfield blocking.

Receiving

1. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage.)
2. As in the NFL, only one player is allowed in motion at a time.
3. A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.

4. When the offense has possession of the ball, absolutely no swatting, batting, or trying to strip the ball from the offensive player is allowed.

Passing

1. Shovel passes are allowed.
2. The quarterback has a seven-second “pass clock.” If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, play is dead, loss of down, and is treated like an incomplete pass. Once the ball is handed off, the seven second rule is no longer in effect.
3. When in the “No Run Zones” the offense must attempt the pass at or beyond the line of scrimmage.
4. A pass that is attempted behind the line of scrimmage in the “No Run Zones” will be whistled dead by the officials and will result in a three yard walk-off and loss of down.
 - a. The next plays will remain “pass only” even outside of the “No Run Zone” since it happened due to a penalty.

Offensive Snapping/Line

1. The ball must be snapped between the legs, not off to one side, to start play.
2. The offense may take snaps from the shotgun formation or directly under the center.
3. The offense must have at least three players on the line of scrimmage. This includes the center.

Punting

1. If the offense has elected to punt on 4th down then all players on offense and defense should take a knee along the line of scrimmage, with exception to the center, punter, and return person.
2. Punts must be snapped in the shotgun formation (except 6U).
3. If the snap is dropped or muffed, the ball will be marked where it lands on the ground.
4. The ball may be thrown or kicked by the punter.
5. Punts that land in the end zone will be brought out to the ten yard line.
6. A punt that hits the top net will be whistled dead at the spot that it hits the net.

Rushing the Quarterback

1. *For 6U, 8U, and 10U, all players who rush the passer must be a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. For 13U, all players who rush the passer must be a minimum of ten yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped.* The line judge should line up at this spot.
2. Any number of players can rush the quarterback as long as they are seven yards back (or ten yards for 13U).
3. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage.
4. Once the ball is handed off, the seven yard rule is no longer in effect, and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage. A special marker will designate seven yards from line of scrimmage. Remember, no blocking or tackling is allowed.

5. Pass rushers may try to swat the pass from the quarterback, but any contact with the quarterback that is not directly attributed to trying to pull their flag will result in a rushing the passer penalty (Illegal Contact).

Substitutions

1. Teams are required to substitute all bench players into the game at the five minute marks of each quarter, and at the end of each quarter.
2. All players are required to play a total of two quarters.
3. Substitutions are only allowed at these designated times. (Exception for injuries)
4. If a team scores just before the substitution point, teams will make their substitutions before the extra point attempt.
5. Clock will stop for ten seconds at each substitution point to allow players to enter/exit field of play.

Penalties

Defense:

- Offside

Three yard walk-off and repeat the down

- Pass Interference

6 yards from LOS and automatic first down

- Illegal Contact

(Holding, tackling, etc.)

6 yards from Spot of Foul and automatic first down

- Illegal Flag pull

(Before receiver has the ball)

6 yards from LOS and repeat the down

- Illegal Rushing

(Starting rush from inside 7-yard marker, *or 10-yard marker for 13U*)

6 yards from LOS and repeat the down

- Unsportsmanlike Conduct

6 yards from LOS and automatic first down

Offense:

- Illegal motion

(More than one person moving, false start, etc.)

Dead Ball- Three yard walk-off and repeat the down.

- Illegal forward pass
(Pass thrown beyond line of scrimmage)
Three yards from LOS and loss of down

- Offensive pass interference
(Illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender)
6 yards from LOS and loss of down

- Flag guarding (swatting, jumping, lowering of shoulders, etc.)
6 yard from spot of the foul and loss of down

- Delay of game
3 yard walk-off
(If 5 minutes or less in game, clock stops and loss of down)

- Intentional Grounding
6 yards from LOS and a loss of down

- Unsportsmanlike Conduct
6 yards from LOS and a loss of down

Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage.

Only the field coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players cannot question judgment calls. Violation of this rule will result in an Unsportsmanlike Conduct penalty on the offending team.

Games cannot end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.