

2023

Rome-Floyd Unified Youth Football Flag Football Coaches Handbook



Rome-Floyd Parks and Recreation Authority Youth Flag Football Rules

(How the Game is Played!)

1. A coin toss determines first possession.
2. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its own 5-yard line and has 4 downs to get to the 50-yd line. Once there, they will have another 4 downs to get to the end-zone.
3. The ball becomes LIVE once the QB has possession of the ball.
4. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield after 4 downs, possession of the ball changes and the opposing team starts its drive from their own 5-yard line.
5. All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yard line. Interceptions start where the ball was intercepted. Interceptions are dead balls.
6. Teams will change sides after the first 20 minute half. There will be 2 – 20 minute half's, with an 8 minute half time – to allow for cheerleaders to perform.
7. Ball is spotted where the player's flag is pulled, where their feet were at when there flag was pulled.
8. One coach will be allowed on the field for offense and defense, permitting they do not interfere or get in the way of the play. This is to help ensure the game keeps moving!
9. The mandatory play rule (MPR) is in effect. Every player will get a minimum of 5 plays per game, and this will be recorded by a coach or team parent. This sheet will be turned into Blake weekly. If a player misses 50% of practices in one week coaches are not required to give them their 5 plays. This needs to be brought to RFPRA sports staffs' attention 24- hours before the game.

Player Requirements & Equipment

1. Teams must have a minimum of 5 players on the field at all times
2. Teams consist of 7-10 players. Ideally, there will be 7 players on the field at all times; both defensively and offensively. If one team only has 5-6 on the field the other team will adjust to play fairly.
3. **ALL PLAYERS MUST WEAR A MOUTH PIECE, A NFL OFFICAL FLAG JERSEY, AND THEIR ISSUED FLAG BELT. WITHOUT ANY OF THESE THEY WILL NOT BE PERMITTED INTO THE GAME!**
4. Players must wear their NFL jersey, and same colored shorts. Matching NFL shorts are available to purchase for \$10. Please see Blake Lambert to get info on ordering these. Otherwise, plain – same colored shorts need to be worn. (Recommended to wear shorts with no pockets.)
5. Teams will use NFL regulated – age appropriate – size footballs. These will be supplied by RFPRA.
6. Games will be played on Field #2 at Riverview Park.

Timing

1. Games consist of 2 twenty minute halves equaling 40 minutes (running clock).
2. Score will not be kept for this league. It will be treated how we treat t-ball, and 6U basketball. (Each player will receive a medal at the last game.)
3. Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.
4. Each team has one 60-second and one 30-second time out per half.
5. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion. (Clock runs unless injury or timeout, unless otherwise called by official.)

Running

1. The quarterback can run with the ball, only after the 7 – second rush rule has expired.
2. Offense may use multiple handoffs. If the QB hands the ball off, they become eligible to receive. (Defense can rush once the ball is handed off, regardless of the 7-second rush rule.) Once the ball has been handed off, all defensive players are eligible to rush.

3. The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
4. Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a defensive player (**no diving**).
5. The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.

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. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time.
3. A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.

Passing

1. All passes must be forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage.
2. Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
3. Interceptions change possession of the ball at the point of interception. Interceptions are the only changes of possession that do not start on the 5-yard line.

Blocking

1. Teach the fundamentals of blocking.
 - a. Coming out of a stance, hands up in the blocking position. (In blocking position)
 - b. Working back and forth in front of the defender.
 - c. Hands Up Blocking = NO CONTACT!!!

Dead Balls

1. To start a play the ball may be snapped between the legs or to the side.
2. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
3. Play is ruled "dead" when:
 - Ball carrier's flag is pulled.
 - Ball carrier steps out of bounds.
 - Touchdown or safety is scored.
 - At the point of interception (interception returns are not allowed).
 - Ball carrier's knee hits the ground.
 - Ball carrier's flag falls off.

Note: There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground.

Defensive Players

1. All defensive players can rush the QB – once the seven second rush clock has expired.
2. In order to rush they must be 5 yards off the line of scrimmage.
3. All defensive players are eligible to drop back and defend the receivers.
4. Interceptions are blown dead at the spot of interception, and the defense takes over possession of the ball at the spot of interception.

Rushing the Quarterback

All players who rush the quarterback must be a minimum of five yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage. **RUSHERS MUST WAIT UNTIL THE 7-SECOND RUSH RULE HAS EXPIRED BEFORE RUSHING.**

Once the ball is handed off, the five-yard rule or seven-second rule is no longer in effect, and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage. A special marker, or the referee will designate five yards from the line of scrimmage. Remember, no blocking or tackling is allowed.

Sportsmanship/Roughing

If the referee witnesses any 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!**

Trash talking is illegal. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. (Trash talk is talk that may be offensive to officials, opposing players, teams, or spectators). If trash talking occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.

NO ONE EXCEPT THE HEAD COACH MAY ADDRESS ONE OF THE REFEREES.

*** Our youth flag football league give the kids of Rome-Floyd County an opportunity to try out flag football, before advancing to contact football, and experience what it is like to be on a team no matter what experience or skill level they are at. We encourage coaches to utilize all players in several different positions to learn the game, and to get kids involved with equal playing time. ***

Penalties

All penalties will be called by the referee.

Defense:

Off sides	5 yards and down remains same
Pass Interference	10 yards and automatic first down
Illegal contact <i>(Holding, blocking, etc.)</i>	5 yards and down remains same
Illegal flag pull <i>(Before receiver has the ball)</i>	5 yards and down remains same
Illegal rushing <i>(Starting rush less than 3-yards from LOS)</i>	5 yards and down remains same

Offense:

Illegal motion & Offsides <i>(More than 1 person moving, false start, etc.)</i>	5 yards and down remains same
Illegal forward pass <i>(Pass received behind line of scrimmage)</i>	5 yards and down remains same
Offensive pass interference <i>(Illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender)</i>	10 yards and loss of down
Flag guarding	5 yards and down remains same
Illegal Contact (Physical Blocking)	5 yards and down remains same

- Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage.
- Only the team captain may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players cannot question judgment calls.
- Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.

Attire

Cleats are allowed, except for metal spikes. Inspections can be made. All players must wear a protective mouthpiece; there are no exceptions.

Official RFPRA Flag Jerseys must be worn during all games. (Jerseys from NFL FLAG supplied)

Note: There are no kickoffs, and no physical blocking is allowed.

Rome-Floyd Parks and Recreation Authority

Youth Flag Football

Coaching Tips

As a Flag Football coach, your main goal should be to create a fun and safe learning environment for your players. Whether this is your first year or you are a returning veteran, there are several things to keep in mind as you begin your RFPRA Flag Football season.

One of the fun parts of coaching flag football is that you are helping in laying the foundation to basic fundamentals of the game of football: passing, catching, and defending. However, teaching kids the value of teamwork should be one of the most important aspects.

Everybody Plays

RFPRA Flag Football games were designed specifically to make it easier for every player to have a role in their team's success. While size and skill will certainly come into play once the action starts, your coaching should emphasize the "working together" aspect of the game.

Tackle Tackling Early

Don't let your practices dissolve into a giant pile of rambunctious kids. For both their safety and your sanity, make sure to discourage any tackling or roughness early on. Remind them that they won't help their team in a game by tackling or being rough.

Sportsmanship Rules!

Help your players be good sports. After a game, shake hands with the other team. Applaud good play by both sides. As a coach, don't get caught up in the "winning at all costs" pitfall. Treat officials with respect. Remember that, whether you know it or not, your players see you as a role model and may imitate your actions good or bad.

Let Them Play Football!

While teaching football skills and strategies is important, keep your lessons as simple as possible. As your team grasps the basics, move on to more advanced ideas. Overloading young players with too much information too early can only increase confusion and decrease fun. It can also cause headaches for you as a coach.