

Boys & Girls Club of the ARV

Flag Football Rules

1. Number of Players
 - a. Each team roster may have an unlimited number of players. There will be a maximum of nine players on both offense and defense. The minimum number of players that a team can have to start a game is eight players. If a team does not have at least eight players by game time the game will be ruled a forfeit. NO EXCEPTIONS.

2. Flags
 - a. Each player on the field will be required to wear flags provided by the Boys & Girls Club. This is to ensure size and condition of flags.
 - b. Illegal alteration, securing, or substitution of flags will result in that player's removal from the game, the head coach will be held responsible.
 - c. The belt will NOT be double or folded before tying around the waist. All flags must hang perpendicular to the ground.
 - d. After a player has tied on their belt, the excess belt must be secured (not hanging loose) so that it is not accidentally grabbed by the defender instead of the flag.

3. Protective Equipment
 - a. Each player must wear a **mouthpiece**, a jersey, and shorts/pants (football pants optional).
 - b. Shoulder pads and helmets are not allowed
 - c. The use of any hard substance on the hand, wrist, elbow, knee, or forearm, no matter how padded, will not be permitted.

4. The Field
 - a. All games will be played on an 80-yard field.
 - b. Fields will be provided by the Boys & Girls Club.

5. Coin Toss
 - a. Approximately five minutes before game time, the official will toss a coin at midfield in the presence of the field captains of the opposing teams, after first designating which captain will call the fall of the coin. The winner of the toss will choose to play either offense or defense to start the game. The winner will do the opposite of what they picked to start the second half.

6. Ball in Play

- a. The ball will be put in play at the beginning of the game, beginning of the second half, and after each score by placing the ball at the midfield line by the official.

7. The Huddle

- a. After the official marks the ball “ready to play”, the offense will have 30 seconds to put the ball in play. If the ball is not in play after 30 seconds, the official will assess a Delay of Game penalty.

8. Coaches

- a. Each team will be allowed not more than four coaches.
- b. Only two coaches will be allowed on the field during play. They are only there to help the players get plays called, and to set the line.
- c. Coaches should NOT interfere with any of the players or officials during play.
- d. Coaches should stand no closer than 10 yards from the line of scrimmage.
- e. If either of the coaches, while on the field, displays any unsportsmanlike conduct, that coach will be sent to the sideline for the remainder of the game. Any further unsportsmanlike behavior will result in that coach being ejected from the vicinity of the game and suspended for their next game. If a coach is suspended twice that coach will not be allowed to coach in our program again.

9. Player in Motion

- a. Only one player is allowed to be in motion. The player’s movement must be parallel to or away from the line of scrimmage and be continuous.

10. Encroachment/Offsides

- a. Offsides will be called for encroachment (crossing over the plane of the ball into the neutral zone, line of scrimmage) by a player from either the offense or defense before the ball is snapped.
- b. A false movement of the football by the center will constitute offensive encroachment.
- c. Encroachment is a dead foul. The play will be immediately whistled dead at the snap of the ball.
- d. If a player on either side lines up offsides, the official will point to that player’s team’s side. If that player does not get back onside before the ball is snapped, he/she will be considered having encroached at the moment of the snap.
- e. If an official has not “encroachment warned” a team for lining up offsides, he/she shall not call encroachment at the snap of the ball.
- f. This rule is designed to speed up the game by helping players line up onside. A team should be warned when they line up offsides.

11. First Downs

- a. Four downs will be allowed, in which the offensive team must advance the football into the next zone.
- b. Zones are marked every 20 yards.
- c. A new series of downs will be awarded to the offensive team if they are in legal possession of the ball, and advance to or beyond their line to gain.
- d. If the current offensive team fails to gain a first down the opposing team will gain possession of the ball.
- e. The zone will be reached when the forward part of the football, in its position when declared dead on the field of play, touches, or is advanced beyond the line marking the next zone.

12. Stances

- a. Any stance is permitted.

13. Line of play

- a. There must be at least 5 players on the offensive and defensive line of scrimmage at all times.
- b. For a player to be considered to be in the backfield, he/she must be one yard or more off the line of scrimmage.
- c. Defensive players may NOT line up directly over the center. Any defensive player lining up with the center must be at least one yard off the line of scrimmage.

14. Screening/Rushing

- a. Screening and blocking is the one single most important area that must be constantly controlled, and the rules governing this must be clear to the offense, defense, and the officials.
- b. In Flag Football, only screen blocking is permitted. Screen blocking is defined as “obstructing the rusher’s path to the quarterback or the ball carrier with any part of the body except with the head and legs. There can be no independent movement of the elbows.”

15. Methods of Screening

- a. The screener must grab his jersey with both hands in front of his body.
- b. The screener may raise his hands to chest height with his elbows extended outward. His hand may not extend forward beyond the elbows at any time.
- c. Although this method cuts down on excessive contact by the screener, it does place the screener in a very vulnerable position; therefore, the main responsibility of avoiding contact rests with the defensive rusher.
- d. The rusher will not pull the screener toward him or push the screener away from him.
- e. A penalty will be called if any player touches the head of another player.
- f. Down-Field Screening will be allowed only within 5 yards of the line of scrimmage.
- g. Illegal down-field screening will be penalized from the line of scrimmage.

- h. “Pick Plays” by the receivers on defensive backs and linebackers are illegal if set by receivers within 5 yards of the defender.
- i. A screener MAY NOT drive into a rusher.
- j. If the rusher touches the head of the quarterback in his attempt to block a pass, a penalty will be called.
- k. A “roughing the passer” penalty will be called if the rusher, in an attempt to deflag the quarterback or block his pass, allows his momentum to carry him into the passer.
- l. Defensive players may not have any contact with the passer while he is passing.
- m. The defensive team may rush as many players as it chooses.

16. Passing

- a. Double passes are not allowed. There can only be one forward pass per play.
- b. There can only be two exchanges of the football in the air (either forward pass or lateral) which are initiated from behind the line of scrimmage. A direct handoff will NOT be considered an exchange of the football in the air.
- c. Legal Sequences
 - i. A pass complete behind the LOS-A lateral-A run across the LOS
 - ii. A pass complete behind the LOS- A run across the LOS
 - iii. A lateral complete behind the LOS-A pass complete behind the LOS
 - iv. A lateral complete behind the LOS-A lateral-A run across the LOS
- d. If the passer is beyond the LOS when the football is released, or if a 3rd exchange of the football in the air is initiated behind the LOS without ever crossing the LOS, an illegal forward pass has occurred and will be marked from the LOS.
- e. Once the ball has crossed the LOS in the air, or in a player’s possession, it cannot be passed forward even if it is returned back across the LOS
- f. Intentional grounding will also constitute an illegal forward pass
- g. A lateral may be a pass thrown overhand or underhand but is always perpendicular to or away from the direction of advancement or team possession
- h. Push passes are allowed as long as they are completed behind the LOS
- i. A passer may NEVER be his own receiver

17. Pass Interference

- a. Pass interference rules will apply to any pass made from behind the LOS whether it is a forward pass or lateral pass and applies to both offensive and defensive players
- b. After the pass is in the air neither the receiver nor the defender may touch the other until one of them touches the ball. If contact occurs after one of them touches the ball, then pass interference cannot be called unless one

- of them catches the ball and the other player “strips the ball” from his hands
- c. Stripping the ball may occur in two forms
 - i. Receiver Stripping – the defender attempts to take the ball from the grasp of the receiver after he has caught the ball
 - ii. Runner Stripping – a defender attempts to take the ball from the grasp of a player who has the ball in a possessive position (runner stripping, a form of illegal de-flagging would be called)
 - d. Once an offensive player establishes possession of the football, the defensive player must go for the flag and NOT THE BALL
 - e. Any contact that occurs after the pass is touched (excluding receiver stripping), whether the pass was complete or incomplete must be judged by the official as either non-intentional contact caused by both players “going for the ball”, or intentional/avoidable contact which will be penalized
 - f. If pass interference occurs on the extra point attempt the ball will be placed on the one-yard line.
 - g. Screening a receiver’s eyes by a defender even without contact will be a pass interference
 - h. Defensive players may not use their open hands to touch or delay a receiver as they come across the LOS
 - i. Receivers and/or defenders may NOT dive in order to catch or deflect a pass by leaving their feet

18. Receiving

- a. The center is the only ineligible receiver on the field other than the passer. Since the defense cannot line up directly opposite the center, this would give the center an unfair advantage.
- b. A receiver may catch a ball even if he steps out of bounds or out the end zone as long as he comes down with one foot inbounds
- c. Two or more receivers may touch the ball in succession resulting in a completed pass
- d. If an offensive and defensive player catch a pass simultaneously, the ball is declared dead at the spot of the catch and the passing team is awarded possession
- e. An offensive player cannot be out of bounds and return inbounds to catch a pass. This will be ruled an incomplete pass

19. Deflagging

- a. A ball carrier is downed and the ball is dead when either knee touches the ground
- b. A defensive player may not leave his feet (dive) to pull the offensive player’s flag
- c. When a defensive player pulls the ball carrier’s flag he is to stop and hold the flag above his head. This shall be considered good sportsmanship if complied with, but no penalty will result if the deflagger fails to do so.

- d. **TACKLING IS NOT ALLOWED.** Tackling is defined as grasping or encircling the body of the ball carrier with hand or arm, impeding his progress. If contact is made, the responsibility of the contact lies with the defensive player.
- e. Prematurely pulling or removing an opponent's flag with the obvious intent to make the offensive player ineligible to become a ball carrier is prohibited
- f. If the quarterback's arm is in forward motion when his flag is pulled, the pass WILL BE allowed
- g. The ball carrier CANNOT PROTECT HIS FLAG by blocking with his arm or hand
- h. The intended receiver of either a forward or lateral pass, even while fumbling or bobbling the ball (before possession is established) is liable for deflagging. The ball will be considered dead at the point the receiver is deflagged
- i. If the passer is deflagged as he is passing the ball, and later in that play receives the ball back, then the ball will be called dead at the point of second possession.
- j. A defender may not push or knock a ball carrier out of bounds

20. Quick Whistle

- a. If an official whistles the play dead prematurely, the offense will have choice of
 - Accepting the ball where it is prematurely whistled dead, with loss of down
 - Running the play over from the LOS, with the same down, with distance to gain
- b. Pretending to pull an opponent's flag (raising an empty hand intentionally) that results in an official's quick whistle will result in a penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct
- c. **OFFENSIVE PENALTIES HAVE PRIORITY OVER QUICK WHISTLE IF ONE WAS COMMITTED BEFORE THE QUICK WHISTLE**

21. Ball Carrier

- a. The responsibility of avoiding contact rests with the ball carrier. He must show the official he has made an effort to avoid contact
- b. The ball carrier will not deliberately run or drive into a defensive player. The first time this happens the ball carrier will be given a warning. The second offense by the same ball carrier will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty. A third offense by the same ball carrier will result in that player being removed for the rest of the game.
- c. The ball carrier may not leave his feet to dive or hurdle in any direction to gain additional yardage, a first down, or a touchdown
- d. The stiff arm is illegal
- e. The ball carrier may not spin to avoid being deflagged

- f. Flag guarding will be marked from the point of infraction or the LOS, whichever is most detrimental to the team committing the infraction
- g. A ball carrier pretending to be knocked down or pushed out of bounds by a defender, in an attempt to draw a tackling or excessive contact penalty, will be penalized for unsportsmanlike conduct

22. The Fumble

- a. When a backward pass (lateral) or fumble hits the ground between the goal lines, it will become a dead ball and belongs to the team last in possession of the football at the spot where it first hits the ground
- b. Forward, offensive fumbles which cross beyond the next line to gain will result in the ball being marked dead at the point at which it was fumbled, with loss of down
- c. When the ball is fumbled into or out of the opposing team's end zone by the offensive team but has not broken the plane of the goal line in their possession, it will be brought back to the point of the fumble

23. The Center Snap

- a. The center snap may touch the ground before it gets to the quarterback and remain playable if the quarterback fields it cleanly off the bounce or from the ground
- b. A center snap must be made between the center's legs
- c. A false movement of the football by the center, after he is set, will constitute encroachment
- d. The center may adjust the ball on the line, so long as he does not attempt to draw the defense offsides

24. The Punt

- a. Punts will only be allowed on fourth down situations
- b. Punts will NOT be returned. The ball is dead at the point it is touched, fielded, or hits the ground, with the receiving team taking possession. They will have a first down and line to gain from that point
- c. Teams must notify the other team of their intent to punt on fourth down

25. Overtime

- a. If at the end of regulation the score is tied the following rules will apply for overtime:
 - A 3 minute break will be given, and then a coin will be flipped to determine which team gets the ball first
 - The ball will be placed on the 10 yard line
 - Each team will have an opportunity to run four plays
 - If after each team has been given a chance to be the offensive team the score is still tied, the ball will be placed on the 5 yard line and the process will be repeated

- If the score is still tied after the second overtime the game will result in a tie
- Each team will be given one timeout per series of offense and one timeout per series of defense. Timeouts are not cumulative.

26. Length of Game and Timeouts

- a. Each team will be allowed 3 timeouts per half
- b. Timeouts cannot be carried over into overtime play
- c. Timeouts will be one minute long
- d. There will be two 15 minute halves. There will be a 5 minute halftime
- e. The clock will stop after a score, after a change of possession, and when a team calls a timeout, otherwise the clock will continue to run.
- f. The clock will stop under 1 minute of each half if there is a penalty.
- g. Additionally, clock will also stop the last 2 minutes of the second half on every first down, incomplete pass, out of bounds, or any other dead ball

27. Scoring Values

- a. Touchdown – 6 points
- b. Safety – 2 points
- c. Extra Points
 - i. Passing – 2 points
 - ii. Running – 1 point
- d. Forfeit game will be scores as having won with a score of 1-0

28. Penalties

- a. Delay of game – 5 yards and replay of down
- b. Encroachment/Offsides – 5 yards and replay of down
- c. Downfield Screening – 5 yards and loss of down from LOS
- d. Pick Plays – 5 yards and loss of down from LOS
- e. Roughing the Passer – 10 yards and auto 1st down from LOS
- f. Illegal Forward Pass – 5 yards and loss of down from LOS
- g. Offensive Pass Interference – 10 yards and loss of down from LOS
- h. Defensive Pass Interference – auto 1st down at point of infraction
- i. Offensive Diving – 5 yards and loss of down from LOS
- j. Defensive Diving – 5 yards and auto 1st down from where play ended
- k. Tackling – 10 yards and auto 1st down from point of infraction
- l. Premature Pulling of Flag – 10 yards and auto 1st down from LOS
- m. Stripping the Ball – 10 yards and auto 1st down from point of infraction
- n. Ball Carrier Protecting Flags – 5 yards and loss of down from LOS
- o. Defender Pushing Ball Carrier Out of Bounds – 10 yards and auto 1st down from point of infraction
- p. Spinning by Ball Carrier to Avoid Being Deflagged – 5 yards and loss of down from LOS
- q. Ineligible Receiver – 5 yards from LOS and loss of down
- r. Unsportsmanlike Conduct
 - Offensive – 10 yards and loss of down
 - Defensive – 10 yards and auto 1st down

29. 6 & Under Rules

- a. There will be two 13 minute halves. There will be a 3 minute halftime
- b. No score will be kept during the game.
- c. All other rules will apply.